

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

UMI[®]

**ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND NATIONALISM IN THE STREETS:
THE POLITICAL MANIPULATION OF ART AND RELIGION
IN TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES**

A Dissertation

by

FRANCESCA GIANCRISTOFARO-CALVI

**Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2000

Major Subject: Anthropology

UMI Number: 9980150

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 9980150

Copyright 2000 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.

**All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346**

**ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND NATIONALISM IN THE STREETS:
THE POLITICAL MANIPULATION OF ART AND RELIGION
IN TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES**

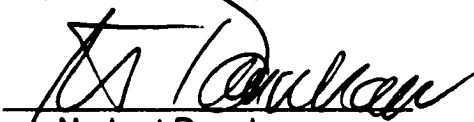
A Dissertation

by

FRANCESCA GIANCRISTOFARO-CALVI

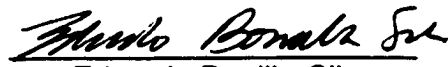
Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved as to style and content by:


Norbert Dannhaeuser
(Chair of Committee)


Vaughn M. Bryant Jr.
(Member)


Kathryn Henderson
(Member)


Eduardo Bonilla-Silva
(Member)


David L. Carlson
(Head of Department)

August 2000

Major Subject: Anthropology

ABSTRACT

Ethnic Identities and Nationalism in the Streets:

The Political Manipulation of Art and Religion

in Trinidad, West Indies. (August 2000)

Francesca Giancristofaro-Calvi,

B.A.; B.S.; M.S., University of Massachusetts;

M.A., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Norbert Dannhaeuser

The identity of a community is shaped by socio-economic factors as well as history. The Caribbean island of Trinidad is characterized by a weak economy, high unemployment, and a variety of ethnic, class, and religious groups. Diverse kinship structures, economic opportunities, cultural behaviors, and residential patterns have facilitated the persistence of spatial and social differentiation. Despite this history, my research suggests that trends toward social homogenization are becoming stronger and that a growing ethnically mixed population may facilitate a cultural, and possibly even a political bridging between local collectivities.

Studies on ritual practices suggest that public celebrations are used as demarcators of boundaries and as weapons in the conflict over political and economic supremacy. The recognition of the power struggles invested in

religious and artistic expressions can therefore enhance our understanding of the social fabric of a country. This research focuses on the impact that selected Trinidadian cultural forms have on shaping local ethnic identities and citizenry. In particular, it hypothesizes that public celebrations can function as occasions where differences and tensions are negotiated in a relatively peaceful manner.

My work limits its scope to the numerically predominant Afro-Trinidadian and East Indo-Trinidadian communities. Through participant observations and interviews, it explores the government's over-arching nation-building effort as well as practices of resistance to it by Trinidadians of African and East Indian descent (Africans and Indians hereafter). Furthermore, it discusses the relevance of globalizing economic forces and their profound effect in providing this society with alternative identities. In a world where countries are often threatened from within by antagonistic groups intent on nationalistic, religious, or ethnic cleansing, it is my hope that this work will produce insights into how ideologies acknowledging pluralism of expressions and beliefs can contribute to a more tolerant society.

A mia mamma

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my Committee Chair Dr. Norbert Dannhaeuser, and the advisory members Dr. Vaughn Bryant, Dr. Kathryn Henderson, Dr. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, and GCR Dr. Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni. They have generously offered me their time and experience as well as their friendly support throughout all stages of this work.

I am also indebted in many ways to the individuals and families in the beautiful island of Trinidad who have contributed to the success of my research. In particular, the following people have facilitated my entrance in different communities: Mrs. G. Ramsingh, Ravi Ji, and the *Hindu Prachar Kendra*; Mrs. D. Misrilal and the National Council of Indian Culture; Mr. N. Fleming, Mr. C. Grey and the staff at the Ministry of Culture and Community Development; Mrs. Z. Hosein, the members of the Bis-Ali tadjah-yard, and various local Islamic families; Mr. J. Lopez and the Silver Stars steelband; the Rada community of Belmont; Mr. G. Padia and the Thompson's; Mr. E. King; Mr. S. Baja; the *Kali Mata Devi Mandir*, and too many faculty and staff at the University of the West Indies and the Institute for Social and Economic Research to be mentioned. Without the assistance and friendship of these individuals this dissertation could not have been written.

Finally, I am grateful for the support, encouragement, and patience of my close friends and family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1
II RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	6
III HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	14
Early History of the Caribbean Region	14
The Plantations	16
British Colonialism	17
Indentureship	18
The 20 th Century	23
IV LITERATURE REVIEW: RACE, ETHNICITY, AND IDENTITY	32
Introduction	32
Perspectives on Ethnicity	36
Conclusions	49
V COMPETING FORCES AND SOCIAL CHANGE	52
Introduction	52
Trinidadian Economic History and Globalization	54
Nationalism	60
Hybridism	65
Creolization	66
Douglarization	72

CHAPTER	Page
VI SECULAR EVENTS AND SYMBOLIC ACTION.....	76
Theoretical Approaches	76
Historical Celebrations in Trinidad	81
The Role of the State	86
VII MUSIC AND OTHER CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS	96
Introduction	96
Steeldrum	101
Calypso	104
Chutney	115
Pichakaree	119
VIII CARNIVAL	123
Introduction	123
History	126
The Dawn of Carnival: an Elite's Frivolity	126
Post-Emancipation Carnival: a Black 'Thang'	128
Canboulay Riots: the Return of the Middle Class	132
20 th Century Carnival: Equal but Separate	135
Today's Carnival	141
Discussion.....	147
The Commodification of Carnival.....	147
Carnival's Opposing Forces.....	152
Extremisms and the Future of Carnival.....	158
IX INDIAN RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS	163
Introduction	163
The Hindu Festivals of <i>Divali</i> and <i>Phagwa</i>	165
The Muslim Festival of <i>Hosay</i>	172
Big <i>Hosay</i> Night	173
New Trends	178
Conclusions.....	181

CHAPTER	Page
X THE POLITICIZATION OF SPACE AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES	186
Ethnicity, Religion, and Revitalization	186
Processes of Space Manipulation	197
Trinidadian Cultural Nodes	203
The Transformative Power of Processions	210
XI DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	215
Discussion	215
On Ethnicity	215
On Ritual Practice	221
Conclusions	224
REFERENCES	227
APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS	248
APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY	270
APPENDIX C: CHRONOLOGY	276
APPENDIX D: 1997-1998 CALENDAR OF ANNUAL FESTIVALS ...	280
APPENDIX E: STATISTICS	285
VITA	287

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Trinidad, locally referred to as the 'Rainbow Country', includes a unique variety of ethnic communities. Once the focal point of an unholy trinity of cultural, political, and economic exploitation, Trinidadian society evolved out of colonization, slavery, indentureship, a plantation economy, and agricultural capitalism. All of these factors contributed to a society that limited, especially in the past, the opportunities for assimilation of the waves of newcomers to the island. This chaotic history also encouraged the various collectivities to hold on to different ancestral identities while stifling the growth of a shared national vision.

Today's Trinidad is a modernized island-state with a democratic system of government, a growing economy, and high unemployment. The country is integrated to a degree that the constituents of its populace participate in the national, political, and educational life. The social milieu, however, continues to be characterized by the presence of a cultural mosaic and a fabric of fragmented communities. Widely diverse places of origin, traditional practices, languages, and faiths, at times incompatible with one another, have generated complex group relations.

This dissertation follows the format of the *Sociological Review*.

These multiple realities define a context where everyday existence develops out of tensions between assimilation and individualism, tradition and innovation. This tension, in turn, perpetuates the presence of distinct collectivities where the dimensions of ethnicity, class, and religion maintain demarcations and inequalities. As suggested by Cancian, solidarity and peaceful coexistence within a community can be challenged by heterogeneous groups whose economic options are not distributed randomly (1992). Moreover, this differentiation hampers the strengthening of national sentiments and a common identity.

My research identifies historical forces that contributed to the evolution of discriminating group loyalties and it comments on the mechanisms involved in group-maintenance. More specifically, it explores manifestations of 'belonging' through informal public channels, as well as Africans' and Indians' conceptualization of a national identity. Each affected by its unique socio-cultural baggage, these two collectivities negotiate historical ties, a nationalistic ideal promoted by the government, and the forces of globalization and modernization.

The dynamics of these negotiations are manifested through a number of mechanisms, including public festivals, artistic expressions, and religious celebrations. These contexts are integral parts of the organization and well being of any community. Numerous scholars have pointed out their role as occasions where alliances are articulated, and ethnic, class, religious, and

gender antagonisms are enacted (see chapter six). This is also true in Trinidad.

Providing a lens through which power-plays can be observed, the body of this work draws from a variety of Trinidadian celebrations including Carnival, *Phagwa*, *Hosay*, *Divali*, Christmas, Independence Day, Emancipation Day and Indian Arrival Day, as well as minor religious ceremonies. These events are investigated for their function as platforms where ethnic identities and nationalistic agendas are generated. These contexts are dissected to expose the social manipulation involved in apparently apolitical situations and to explain their role in the process of identity-construction at the individual, group, and national levels. In this pursuit, I document the evolution of notions of 'one-ness' as well as the resistance of groups to assimilation and state-sponsored nationalism.

This research illustrates the dynamics of the effort by the Trinidadian establishment to present an image of a unified nation. Intruding with its instruments of control and conscious of the symbolic power of seemingly light-hearted events, the Trinidadian government has been appropriating public stages to promote and strengthen an ideal 'Trinidadian-ness'. This campaign is replicated through formal mechanisms, i.e. political practices, the organisms of the state, and the economic and education systems, as well as through unconventional means such as street parades, sporting events, and public occasions.

In its efforts toward ideological unanimity, the officialdom is supported by the institutions of a capitalist economy furthering the course toward homogenization. Commodification increasingly defines the Trinidadian lifestyle, while individual and collective identities can be chosen from a mediated mass information system readily providing practices devoid of local content. Global tourism is turning cultural expressions into products for mass consumption, artistic forms have become prone to conscious manipulations and, as suggested by Hobsbawm, culture is being ideologized and re-invented for utilitarian purposes (1990).

The historic identity of each local collectivity, however, is not easily pushed aside, and the multi-ethnic population of Trinidad continues to challenge the authority of the government's monolithic, nationalistic message. Although these patriotic feelings of 'Trinidadian-ness' are consistently asserted, local groups seem to refuse putting aside their traditional affiliations and continue to channel their dissenting voices through a variety of ritual practices. The resulting heteroglossia found in apparently trivial public settings substantiates their function as contexts for active political resistance.

Forms of dissent against social integration also include the re-formulating of ethnic and religious traditions and the creation of cultural spaces that occasionally hamper the formation of a harmonious national community. Frequent daily contacts with individuals culturally diverse from themselves may leave people with a desire to refrain from establishing close personal

relations with them. In the same way that world nationalist movements, religious revivalism, and language revitalization are rebuffing the unifying pulls of globalization, similarly Trinidadians are constructing symbolically discriminatory spaces and practices that challenge integration. Are these reactionary measures transitory phenomena confirming that globalization and homogenization are taking over as Hobsbawm (1983) and Anderson (1983) would suggest? Could local cleavages escalate to dangerous levels of inter-group tensions or do mediating mechanisms able to counteract trends toward disintegration already exist?

In summary, this work addresses the following issues: (1) the multivocality of public festivals and religious ceremonies and their role in identity-building and maintenance, (2) the manipulation of art and religion for social, political, and economic empowerment, (3) the process of inventing traditions and creating symbolic spaces that define culturally segregated milieus, (4) the effects of globalization and modernization on the shaping of a national identity and, (5) the efficacy of the Trinidadian government's maneuvering of celebrations to enforce a unifying, national vision. The discussion of these issues is pursued in an effort to determine their impact on Trinidad's current social fabric as well as to generate a plausible image of the country's political future. In this representation my work proposes the role of the mixed offspring of Africans and Indians (*Douglas*) in bridging historically differentiated peoples as well as interests.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this dissertation were collected during a thirteen-month fieldwork on the island of Trinidad (Figure 1). The stay began in January 1997, just before the Carnival celebrations of that year, and ended in February 1998, shortly after Carnival. This effort followed a preliminary visit to Trinidad in 1996, when initial contacts in the capital city of Port-of-Spain were made.

My initial research interest was in Carnival, so I chose to settle in Port-of-Spain, where Carnival attendance and the artistic displays are on a larger scale than in the rest of the island. However, I soon identified many other public events to be relevant to the ethnic and nationalistic discourse (see Calendar in Appendix D). As a result, I decided to broaden my research and to include the analysis of a number of additional religious and secular celebrations.

Early in my work I also realized the persistence of a historical dichotomy between the urban and rural areas, and the important role physical space had in power-plays involving the African and Indian communities, the two groups on which my research focused. Africans mainly inhabit the urban sprawl of the East-West Corridor as well as the sparsely populated northeast and east coastal areas, except for Nariva. Here both Africans and Indians

engage in small-scale cocoa farming. 'Indian Country', populated predominantly by Indians, includes the sugar belt and subsidiary rice growing areas of Trinidad, as well as the cities of San Fernando and Chaguanas, the latter being the hub of the Caroni central region (Figure 2). Tobago, Trinidad's twin island, is almost entirely African.

The small size of Trinidad and the relatively efficient transportation system facilitated my explorations of ethnic-based spatial segregation. In particular, maxi-taxis, the most popular form of public transportation, allowed me to travel to the countryside without having to relocate from the capital city. 'Maxis' are brightly decorated eight-to-fifteen passenger vans often displaying artistic graffiti and a bountiful supply of chrome accessories and religious icons. However, the most colorful feature of the 'maxis' is not the decorations or the blaring, potentially eardrum shattering music played through the stereo, but rather the *lime* (idle chatting) that usually develops among the riders. Here you can get the updated scores of the India vs. West Indies cricket match as well as a feel for what the broader community thinks about the latest calypso music controversy or the most recent political scandal. *Limes* in 'maxis' offered an important contribution to this research!

Port-of-Spain is a capital city of about 50,000 people. Although divided into neighborhoods where unique histories still partially determine the class and ethnic membership of the residents, Port-of-Spain can be defined as a cosmopolitan and integrated urban center (Figure 3). Here, during the first

months of my stay, I rented a room with two different local families. The first one resided in the ethnically-mixed neighborhood of St. James and was composed of a widowed woman and her brother, both in their 50's. Although of mixed African and Venezuelan descent, they looked and considered themselves white. The widow practiced as a private hairdresser while the brother was a retired horse trainer. Their niece was one of the first white females to sing calypso music. Unfortunately the quickly souring relationship with my hosts and my consequent brief stay did not give me enough time to arrange for an interview with their popular family member.

The second family I stayed with lived in the middle-class neighborhood of Woodbrook and included a couple in their 40's and their two teen-aged children. The wife, of mixed African and white heritage, grew up in southern Trinidad. She taught primary school and was an ardent Catholic. The husband, who worked for the Trinidadian government, was of mixed African, white, and Chinese descent.

These initial arrangements expedited my settling in the community and facilitated my access to networks of people. These logistics also strengthened my understanding of the local lifestyle, allowed me to engage in non-participant observations without significantly affecting the actors' behavior, and made individuals more comfortable when approached about my work. I observed strategies of economic survival, property ownership, forms of labor and wage work, as well as gender, inter-generational, and kinship relations.

Albeit in an informal manner, I had many opportunities to discuss my work with my hosts and received suggestions as well as names of other contacts.

Individuals who have been interviewed and have played a determinant role in my data collection are mentioned in my acknowledgment section.

Later on in the year I moved into my own place and rented first a studio-apartment (also in Woodbrook) from a so-called red -- a very light-skinned Creole, middle-class family -- (please refer to the glossary in the appendices for foreign or local terminology). Then, in the same neighborhood, I moved to a one-bedroom apartment attached to the house of an Indian woman and her Irish husband. This childless couple lived half of the year in London. Finally, I returned to St. James where I occupied a one-bedroom apartment owned by a retired African architect.

Attending places of devotion such as churches, Hindu *mandirs* (temples) and Muslim *masjeeds* (mosques), as well as various civic associations, also facilitated my entrance into the community and data gathering in general. In my opinion, the fact that many Trinidadians have lived abroad at some point in their lives, or have relatives scattered in different parts of the Western World, has made them particularly open-minded towards foreigners. Being an Italian woman was not an obstacle in establishing rapport, and by the second half of my stay I was able to count on some relatively deep relationships.

The presence of such a supportive environment, however, did not preclude me from recognizing the limits that a European upbringing and a U.S. education brought to my understanding of some aspects of Trinidadian society. The validity of ethnographic work, in fact, has been much debated in recent years especially for its intrinsically authoritarian approach to representation. Critique of ethnographic writing has addressed its inherent incompleteness, its inability to represent a society in its entirety, and its tendency to suppress discordant voices (Clifford, 1988; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Fisher, 1986).

This author recognizes her authority over the text and to some degree over those people described in it. However, she also believes that these limitations are best overcome by pursuing a type of research that is able to spur debate--a desirable sociological end regardless of its theoretical point of departure. The present study, therefore, represents a traditional ethnographic voice where the author tries to capture some of the unique perspectives Trinidadians adopt in interpreting their surrounding social reality. These representations are however, colored by the author's personal experience, and by the cultural baggage she carried, and further developed, throughout her fieldwork.

Although the following analysis focuses on a couple of ethnic groups within a small society, it aspires to elucidate much broader issues. It examines the applicability of ritual theory and ethnic literature on empirical

instances and attempts to gain insight into the relationship between people's practices and theoretical predictions.

Data were drawn from both the micro- and macro-levels. Micro-level information was obtained through ethnographic efforts, including participant and non-participant observations, personal interactions, casual conversations, and in-depth individual testimonies and narratives. At the macro-level, this information was analyzed within the context of the country's socio-economic history and present-day national and global background. The correlation of observations and personal narratives within these milieus provides a snapshot of the local ethnic and nationalistic situation. Furthermore, this investigation also hints to the ways in which the aesthetic preferences and cultural expressions of Trinidadian collectivities re-conceptualize historic identities as well as more recent nationalistic notions.

To collect evidence, first I conducted short introductory interviews with key community leaders or religious figures in order to obtain permission to distribute a one-page questionnaire to the members of the community (for example, of a temple or an association). Although designed to provide baseline information on my informants, this simple questionnaire was rarely filled out and returned. It soon became clear that the vast majority of people were much more willing to participate in an informal interview, than to provide written answers.

I then abandoned the questionnaire tactic and started attending community activities, while scheduling informal meetings with individuals who had shown some interest in my work. My participation in a variety of mass celebrations allowed me to document various ways in which the ethnic and nationalistic discourse were articulated in the public domain. More importantly, my *liming* before and after these celebrations gave me the opportunity to gather information not explicitly available during the events themselves.

Throughout this fieldwork, however, I understood sacred ceremonies only to a limited degree. Here, expressions of a metaphysical world that widely permeated both the African and the Indian communities became quite evident through ancestral traditions and practices. Both cosmological cores, the African and the Indian, were quite alien to me, and my locally acquired knowledge provided only a limited tool for their interpretation. The contradictory results and opinions I occasionally recorded, therefore, reflect the complexity of the issues at hand and are here presented to chart the path for further investigation.

The informants' input collected through the classical anthropological techniques of participant observations, casual conversations, and occasional more formal interviews are integrated throughout the body of this text. Roughly twenty associates from the African and Indian communities were the subjects of more detailed interviews and became key contributors to my work.

Their personal narratives were particularly useful in exploring people's sentiments towards their group's historical past, present affiliations, sense of citizenry, and rapport outside of their own community. In keeping with their wishes, the informants' real names are not used in this dissertation.

To deepen my work with historical evidence, I conducted library research using a variety of official documents from town archives, among them socio-economic and demographic records available at the Census Bureau and other government agencies such as the Ministry of Culture and Community Development. I gathered press material mainly from the major local newspapers: the *Trinidad Guardian*, the *Trinidad Express*, the *Independent*, and the *Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*. I also drew from lyrics of calypso, *chutney*, and *pichakaree* songs, for their words offer great insight into the social nuances characterizing this society. Finally, I have exchanged ideas with, read papers of, and attended presentations by local scholars from the St. Augustine Campus of the West Indies University, the Institute of Social and Economic Research, and other local Institutions.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

EARLY HISTORY OF THE CARIBBEAN REGION

The social structure and identity of a community is defined not just by present-day socio-economic factors but by its history and geography as well. Stretching between the Mexican Yucatan peninsula and the northern margins of South America, the Caribbean basin includes about 50 islands. Following their discovery by Christopher Columbus in 1492, they became the first New World possessions to fall under European colonialism.

A typical insular ecology characterized mainly by the suitability for agriculture describes nearly all the Caribbean countries. Both the climate and the fertility of the soil are optimal for tropical cultivation: sugar, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, fruits, and spices have been produced either on peasant holdings or by large-scale enterprises. Throughout the region, plantation economies developed in the form of large estates and engaged in intensive commercial production. Spain first, France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands later, established a hold on different islands and while pursuing their mercantile exploitation, they forced upon the region novel political orientations, cultural preferences, and economic systems.

In the Caribbean, colonization was often associated with an initial exploitation of the autochthonous Amerindian populations and their resulting decline in number. At the time Columbus arrived in Trinidad in 1498, for example, Amerindians were occupying Cuba, Jamaica, *Espanola* (Dominican Republic and Haiti), Puerto Rico and the Smaller Antilles southwest to Trinidad. Here, Columbus found about 35,000 inhabitants of the *Shebaio*, *Nepoio Yao*, and *Arawak* tribes but their presence had only a limited impact on the colonization process. In smaller islands Amerindians were easily eliminated or genetically absorbed within few generations. In larger islands, especially in the presence of a rugged territory, aboriginal resistance was higher and, at least initially, the first Europeans limited their expansion to the coastal areas. A Dominican missionary, *Bartolome' de Las Casas*, narrated the atrocities inflicted by the Europeans against indigenous people in his *Historia de las Indias* (1971). Spain's later rivals completed the near-total destruction of the indigenous cultures by basically extirpating all the local predecessors that managed to survive the first stages of the conquest. This scourging of the human landscape allowed Europeans to carry on their colonialist experience in the Caribbean as if they were occupying empty territories.

THE PLANTATIONS

The spread of the plantation system played a fundamental role in the history of the Caribbean not only by providing a distinct agricultural type of production but also by introducing various forms of labor exploitation, including slavery and indentureship. Initially it was the mining enterprise that had driven the Spanish interests across the Atlantic. With its decline, plantation agriculture and sugar production became the common denominators in the Caribbean. The availability of fertile land and the constant need for a field-labor force became major catalysts for the formation, throughout the following centuries, of a unique demographic regional setting.

Within the economy of each island, the plantation system and the presence or absence of a local labor force strongly contributed to a drastic transformation in the composition of the population (Lewis, 1982). As Mintz observed, plantation economy favored the entrance of a variety of peoples and shaped the basis of societal models grown out of exceedingly high human costs (1984). The plenitude of land relative to scarce labor at least initially made slavery the arrangement most fit for providing an inexpensive work force. Areas such as Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, and Haiti witnessed a heavy import of West African slaves coming mainly from Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, and Benin.

In 1783, Carlos III, King of Spain, recognized the limited presence of Spaniards in the Caribbean and the urgency of having an adequate population to develop its colonies. The royal proclamation or *Cedula de Poblacion* was issued to offer a number of acres to each Roman Catholic (32 to a white and 16 to a free-colored) willing to settle and colonize uncultivated land on Spanish territories. The impact of the *Cedula* on Trinidad was dramatic. Merely fourteen years later the total population of the island had increased from 2,783 to 17,718 with the number of African slaves jumping from 310 to 10,009 (Anthony, 1975). Together with the slaves, a large number of French immigrants also entered the country lured by the generous land grants. These Frenchmen and women -- some aristocrats escaping the aftermath of the French revolution, others coming from the neighboring French-Caribbean territories -- introduced a new language as well as rich traditions still present today.

BRITISH COLONIALISM

By the 1790's, Trinidad had become a threat to the security of the British West Indies and an obstacle to Britain's war strategy. In 1797, three centuries of Spanish rule in Trinidad ended with the British occupation of the capital city of Port-of-Spain and the conquest of their colony (Brereton, 1981). Since its capitulation, Trinidad witnessed a major struggle of influence

between the old landed aristocracy, mainly Catholic French, Spanish, and Creole (descendents of white European and African parents), and the new British-Protestant mercantile elite (Figure 4). British colonialism was different from the Spanish and French domination and it quickly shaped social patterns typical of a 'distant colonialism'. Control was imposed from afar and the small local British elite prevented other groups from adopting its own cultural norms.

Plantations became increasingly managed as manor-like, capitalistic enterprises characterized by the absence of slaves' buying power and by limited opportunities for education, occupational diversification, and skill improvement. As Horowitz points out, the processing of prime material was carried out in the European *metropole* and the refined products re-circulated in the Caribbean market at much higher prices (1985). This economic structure perpetuated in Trinidad the existence of a large mass subjugated by a small power-holding minority. In turn, the bipolar formation maintained, even after slave emancipation, very rigid social and political relationships and did not encourage the growth of strong unifying sentiments.

INDENTURESHIP

For centuries, economic interests had divided the Trinidadian population into masters and subjects and even after emancipation in 1834, the plantation system retained such structure. At the beginning of the 19th

century, the British Parliament's anti-slavery attitudes turned into an official Bill abolishing this commerce¹. At that time the African slave population in Trinidad numbered about 20,000 (Anthony, 1975). Sugar, however, continued to be a precious commodity and its manufacture an important source of income. The local landed aristocracy, together with British planters and traders, soon realized the implication of emancipation: a massive labor force becoming scarce and expensive.

Former slaves, probably identifying plantations with slavery, refused to continue working the land as free laborers and migrated to urban centers (Klass, 1961). Landowners, in order to avert financial ruin, pressed for new immigration policies facilitating large movements of laborers from the European and Asian continents, as well as from within the Caribbean basin. Driven by economic necessity, Indians, Portuguese, Middle Easterners, neighboring West Indians, Africans, Venezuelans, and Chinese entered Trinidad throughout the 19th century and, once settled, they cultivated very distinct religious, cultural, and artistic experiences (Brereton, 1981; Lieber, 1981; Rodman, 1971).

¹ At the beginning of the 1800's, many people in Britain were in favor of abolishing the slave trade and a strong campaign was conducted to persuade the government to make it illegal. Together with changing religious views and an increased awareness of the inhumanity of slavery, the development of factories freed the British economy from its need for slave labor further questioning the persistence of slavery. Trinidad did not have a well-established legislature handling slavery so the British Parliament used this opportunity to run an early 'experiment', "...on which to work out the problem of Negro emancipation" (Anthony, 1975).

At the same time the urban segment of the African population underwent a process of assimilation, i.e. Creolization, through miscegenation and transculturation with the dominant European classes. Partly due to sharing languages (English, French, and Spanish), a Christian faith, and overall similar societal values and organization, British administrators included light-skinned middle-class Africans and Creoles in the administrative and political systems. In contrast, the African masses and other ethnic groups such as Indians and Chinese did not follow, but maintained various forms of segregation and closed nuclear grouping.

In particular, one population replaced ex-slaves and become the new Trinidadian agricultural sector: workers from British India. Between 1845 and 1917, forced by dire economic conditions, a total of 143,939 Indians entered Trinidad. They came mainly from the densely populated central plain of the Ganges along Uttar Pradesh, Oudh, Bihar, as well as from Orissa. A few Indians, 9,033 in all, also arrived in Trinidad from Madras. Under a form of serfdom called indentureship, these laborers were given free passage, a five-year contract to work for wages and, upon its completion, a free return to India (Brereton, 1981; Tinker, 1974).

In Trinidad their conditions were not much better than the ones African slaves had endured, as the plantation system continued to hamper the growth of economic equality and peaceful collaboration between ethnic groups. On arrival, Indians were banished almost immediately to the sugar estates, which

soon became little communities strongly mirroring the Indian villages they had left behind (Figure 5). Indians' confinement to secluded rural areas minimized opportunities to interact with the wider society and subjected them to an unusual degree of social and spatial isolation.

The massive Indian presence also depressed rural labor wages and strongly impacted the economic power of African ex-slaves. This state of affairs contributed to Africans' perception of Indians as usurpers and competitors. Brereton, in her *History of Trinidad*, described how quickly stereotypes about Indians evolved within the larger society. Since their arrival Indians were derided by the wider population for their uncivilized lifestyle and religious practices and cast off as outsiders and rural illiterates (1981). These distorted images depicting them as deceitful and prone to alcoholism and violence prevented, for years to come, their access to the social life of the country.

Notwithstanding their hardships, a large number of Indians settled in Trinidad permanently and only one-fifth of those who came returned to India (Vertovec, 1992). In 1869, Governor Gordon made available inexpensive Crown land plots to ex-indentured laborers willing to trade in their return passage. This opportunity laid the foundation for a powerful Indian peasantry whose traditions, religions, arts, and behaviors slowly enriched the cultural profile of this increasingly cosmopolitan society. As pointed out by Braithwaite, Indians also quickly prospered economically. Their work ethic

and frugality, as well as their being kept outside of the European and African social system, allowed them to accumulate wealth without having to commit to the mainstream standard of living (1953). A calypso sung by the present African Director of the Ministry of Culture records Indians' economic success:

*Barefooted this man came from India
 Seeking wealth and fame
 With a bolt of cloth he start in San Fernando
 Bought and sold everything
 He invested all his savings
 And in one year's time the Empire starts to grow
 Anything Mr. Ram put he hand on
 The thing does swing from a shack to a mansion.*

(Chalkie, 1984)

Trinidad's experience of colonialism, the plantation system, slavery, and indentureship all contributed to the formation of divergent economic interests. The presence of antagonistic economic patterns constructed differentiated social clusters and restrained opportunities for most groups. It prolonged newcomers' occupancy of lower-class status and intensified the holding of separate identities (Mintz, 1984; Williams, 1966). In the long run, these cleavages prevented the acculturation of the many foreigners who, throughout the centuries, entered in different waves specialized economic sectors without being able to build a more homogeneous community.

THE 20TH CENTURY

The introduction on the market, in the early 20th century, of the European sugar beet contributed to the decline of Caribbean agricultural exports. Despite this change, in Trinidad the pattern of residential polarization created by the plantation economy persisted. Ex-slaves continued to migrate to urban centers where they formed the large mass of the proletariat. Ex-indentured workers stayed in the rural areas to become small landholders or petty traders. Africans and Indians, as a result, had limited contact and followed very different economic and political interests. The movements for constitutional changes, the 1930's labor riots, adult suffrage in 1946, as well as the anti-colonial struggle were local historical circumstances that clearly reflected the presence of ethnic-based agendas (Clarke, 1986; Kiely, 1996; La Guerre, 1982; Ryan, 1972; Singh, 1994; Williams, 1962).

To understand these divergences it is necessary to acknowledge the type of internal relations that over the years developed between the British elite, the African and Creole urban masses, and the rural Indian community. The dominant organizational strategy of the colonial elite was the divide-and-rule policy rather than assimilationist efforts. British interests promoted economic advancement of the Indian and African communities in terms that were mutually exclusive, and already existing confrontational inter-group imageries contributed to tense dynamics across the ethnic divider. While

whites, Creoles, and Africans formed a continuum along the pole of the Western ideology, Indians were left displaced outside the social field. Based on categorizations of 'us versus them,' "the African problematic developed as one of vertical oppression, the Indian one of horizontal alienation" (Sankeralli, 1995).

International events also shaped local inter-ethnic relations and influenced imageries groups held of one other. In 1947, India's independence was followed by a wave of global de-colonization struggles. Third World nation-states emerged and, between the 1950's and 1960's, many African countries entered the battle for independence. By the second half of the 20th century, the anticipation of dramatic political changes perpetuated in Trinidad a tense atmosphere, which contributed to a heated mixture of political scholarship, demagoguery, and satirical debate (Stewart, 1986). Local figures maneuvered in a milieu of ethnic-based sectional politics and used ethnic rhetoric to obtain legitimacy from the outside world, concessions from the state, and political leverage from the populace.

At the establishment of locally based political parties, the Trinidadian electorate was predominantly African. As a result, the emerging African elite adopted the Creole category to define 'native-ness' and the rules of the new socio-political game. The Creole category included African and European elements, both particularly attractive to the nationalists. This mix not only encompassed the perceived 'correct' ancestral roots but it also provided a

base for 'things' Trinidadian (locally referred as 'true Trini'). In turn, the incorporation of the Creole category in the nation-building discourse further de-legitimized the local Indian culture. This was perceived by the Afro-Creole elite as a threat to the emerging nation and a future post-colonial state.

In the 1950's, African Prime Minister Williams' goal was to develop a sense of community within African political action, and in 1956, for the first time, a pro-independent Trinidad nationalist party won the general elections. Achieving internal government in 1959 did not attenuate ethnic conflicts and the 1961 general elections saw the country on the brink of an internecine war. An Indian based party, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), accused the African-based People's Nationalist Movement Party (PNM) of having made Indian activists the target of African vandalism and of having sabotaged their efforts of political participation.

Independence in 1962 did not lead to stability and it was only through the involvement of the British Colonial Office and a firmly positioned democratic multi-party system that major inter-ethnic violence was avoided. The following three decades witnessed the PNM shaping a newly born Trinidadian nationalism with African ideologies and a populist agenda tempered by economic pragmatism (Craig, 1974, 1982).

Although the limited Indian presence in politics reinforced the Africans' view of Indians as a monolithic, reactionary, anti-nationalistic, backward-looking, and recalcitrant group, this situation was not to last. Post-

independence electoral reforms, as well as local and worldwide political changes slowly facilitated the entrance of Indians on the political scene. Through the strong voices of political heroes such as Cipriani, Cola Rienzi, Kumar, and Capildeo the Indian community gained an active standing in the affairs of the country (Ryan, 1995, 1996). This presence encouraged feelings of ethnic and nationalist consciousness among Indians, but Africans often misinterpreted this pride as aggression aimed at control and domination. The emergence of a more confident Indian community, in fact, brought to light the issue over which group's cultural repertoire should provide the rudimentary basis for a claim to 'Trinidadian-ness'. In the context of a recent independence this question became critical because the answer to it ultimately could determine who had the legitimate right to inherit the state (Munasinghe 1993). While both collectivities had fought British colonial authorities and were participating in the patriotic insurgence, clearly there was little nationalistic conceptualization shared between them.

As indicated by Munasinghe, Prime Minister William's vision of unity, encapsulated a type of nationalism based on a Christian-based homogeneity rather than on the acceptance of heterogeneous elements (1993). For example, although all factions perceived education as a primary source for mobility, the compulsory educational system set in place by the PNM mainly favored an 'appropriate' Creole ideal of national culture. Indians saw this plan as another control mechanism slighting Indian culture and religion. While

Indian organizations pioneered an effort to educate the rural masses through sponsorship of primarily Hindu schools, the PNM government opposed them for their potential to increase fragmentation within the nation. In the same way that the African and Indian communities had historically perceived different principles of subordination, so too they envisioned different avenues for redemption.

The following de-colonization decades witnessed more horizontal hostilities between Africans and Indians than vertical ones between the economically privileged white and Creole elite and the rest of the population. The newly proclaimed citizenship status, in fact, did not eliminate earlier forms of differentiation. At the grassroots, Indian villages and African towns may have shared a similar folk-life reality, but each group's vision of a new citizenry was strongly affected by very different histories. Indians increasingly questioned the implicit claim that their ethnic identity was necessarily antithetical to a national one. They wrested from the state the prerogative of constructing appropriate Indian imageries and advanced an identity on their own terms, which did not compromise their ethnic loyalty.

The goal for the post-colonial Afro-Creole leadership became to provide an ideal of citizenry that could underpin a national identity able to overcome group differences. Because the new Trinidadian citizens lacked a shared past or a primordial attachment to a common land that could incorporate all sectional sentiments, nationalism had, by necessity, to be oriented toward the

future. However, in a context where national sentiments are taking time to become the bases on which each collectivity can project a future, the nation's claim of allegiance continues to be challenged by persistent historical affiliations.

Meanwhile, since the 1980's an increased economic security has injected a sense of confidence among Indians. These are abandoning their traditional agricultural enclave and are rejecting social and spatial seclusion. Economic progress is informing Indians' fight to unearth both the discriminating underpinnings of their society as well as the ethnic paradigms used to interpret every facet of Trinidadian life. Indian leaders have abandoned defensive postures and are charting a new course for the nation. This has also resulted in the recognition of their active role on the political stage and in greater employment opportunities.

Henry's study on the local wealth distribution confirms that the average income for Indians is officially equal to the one for Africans (1989). Ryan's analysis on civil service employment segregation practices reports that discrimination against Indians has decreased, and that a more balanced distribution between ethnic groups and occupations has been achieved (1991). In particular the civil service, once an African bastion, has open up to Indians, much to the dismay of the African community. This redistribution of white-collar posts has been perceived by some as an act of discrimination against the African community, and many politicians have fostered a frenzied

political climate by conveniently codifying these economic and political issues as ethnic conflicts.

In 1986, even if only for a short time, thirty years of PNM supremacy were interrupted by the electoral success of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), an amalgam of ethnic and class-based parties locally known as the 'One Love' Party. The rise of the NAR created an appropriate context for the contestation of the African political hegemony and marked the beginning of more permanent changes on the political scene. These included in 1987 the consecutive nomination for two terms of Mr. N. Hassanali as the first Indo-Muslim Head of State and, in 1995, the election of Mr. B. Panday as the first Hindu Prime Minister of Indian descent. His coalition of the Indian-based United National Congress (UNC) with the NAR has pursued a government plan based on increased social spending and public investments, economic liberalization, and a prudent fiscal management.

Such programs contributed moderate GDP growth rates, low inflation (5.6), a 98 percent literacy rate, a total GNP of about US\$ 6 billion, and unemployment to a 13-year low (22.3 percent in 1987, 14.2 percent in 1998) (EIU Country Profile 1999-2000). These remarkable circumstances are evidencing a change in the power distribution within the political stage as well as the entire profile of country. However, the malcontent spurred by nepotism and by the Prime Minister's strong personality has impaired the current government from building a multi-ethnic support base. The July 1999 local

government election confirmed the persistence of the kind of 'ethnic politics' that has been characterizing this democracy for decades. Support for the UNC and the PNM along ethnic lines has been confirmed by the UNC's having received 52 percent of the vote and the PNM 46 percent (both up 2 points from the 1996 elections). Neither party has made inroads into the other's ethnic support base, nor has there been a challenge of the traditional political alliances with the UNC drawing its rural Indian constituency, and the PNM its urban African one.

This historical chapter helps connecting the social purpose manifested through the ritual practices analyzed in this work with the nexus of power relations that developed throughout centuries. The evolution of African and Indian identities as mutually exclusive categories underlines the historicity of the local ethnic and nationalistic discourse. Although during the colonial period both groups were positioned against the state, their symbolic relation to the incipient nation differed widely. Africans, in fact, were given recognition of a 'native-ness' that Indians were continuously denied. This projection of 'Indian-ness' as foreign, partly explains why today's Indian struggle revolves around reformulating a new category of 'Trinidadian-ness' inclusive of Indian elements.

The recent allotment of privilege and the oppositional interests of a segmented population have made this small island-nation the focal point of complex social mediations. Presently, a total population of about 1,300,000

comprises 40.3 percent Indians, 39.6 percent Africans, 18.4 percent people of mixed descent, 0.5 percent Chinese, and another 1.2 percent including Spanish, British, Portuguese, French Creoles, Middle Easterners (particularly Syrians), and Venezuelans (TIDCO, Statistical Unit, 1997). The fact that no one group constitutes more than 50 percent defines Trinidad a society of ethnic minorities and paves the road for exceptional patterns of group interactions. Africans and Indians, however, are the two groups currently playing the most important role in shaping the profile of this country. Furthermore, this research argues that a growing *Dougl*a population (see chapter five) is the harbinger of cultural changes increasingly describing the daily relations between local collectivities.

My work documents the details of the struggle involved in the current re-conceptualization of the boundaries of what it is to be Trinidadian. Along the path marked by a number of scholars (Rohlehr, 1990; Trotman, 1991; Warner in Yelvington, 1993; Ahye and Lee in Ryan ed., 1991), this study specifically analyzes how group identities as well as citizenry are negotiated through informal channels ranging from song lyrics to Carnival masquerades, from religious ceremonies to festive events.

CHAPTER IV

LITERATURE REVIEW: RACE, ETHNICITY, AND IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical discourse about ethnicity and race has focused for a long time on two major issues: (1) identifying the factors involved in shaping and maintaining racial and ethnic loyalties and, (2) establishing whether modernization and globalization can replace racial and ethnic ties with alternative forms of affiliation. Although race continues to be a sociological reality, I am only going to briefly introduce this concept and explain why my research will not use it as an analytical tool.

Most societies perceive race in ways that bear consequences on people's lives. Selected traits, physical or behavioral, when rooted in biology are given an innate ontological status: natural and immutable. The biologization of such traits constitutes the indelible marker of race whose relevance is ultimately determined by each given social milieu. In the Caribbean, race is used beyond strict biological criteria and its misuse has often arisen when manipulated as a rallying point for specific ideological ends. Nash noted that throughout history, social and cultural differences have been persistent, necessary, and valuable, and that tensions arise only in the political and economic interests that get entangled with defining criteria such as race or

ethnicity (1989). This has also been the case in Trinidad where irresponsible politicians have frequently adopted strategies based on the wanton deployment of race.

Presented as a political construct, race is manipulated to translate skin-colors, hair types, and other phenotypic attributes into social structures within which people are forced to move. Stereotyping through caricature of cultural attributes and physical traits sustains boundaries and enhances group discrimination. Boundary-maintaining mechanisms define markers of difference and attest to who is a member of the group and what minimal cultural items are required for 'belonging' (Barth, 1969). These indexes are visible to members and non-members alike, and their features are understood and reacted to in social situations (Nash, 1989).

In the Trinidadian popular discourse, which my fieldwork observations confirmed, ethnic collectivities have developed stereotypical perceptions about one another. Africans, for example, perceive markers of 'Indian-ness' as being physically weak, temperamental, timid, sneaky, family oriented, and occupationally stable, making the image of a poorly dressed, miserly Indian millionaire a common one. Indians often view Africans as immature and wasteful, prone to live day by day, indulging in conspicuous consumption, and unable to maintain family ties or to hold a job.

Furthermore the idiom of color has organized local groups on the basis of their point of entry in the colonial order. As such, to be white is to have

been a master, to be black a slave, and to be Indian an indentured laborer. In short, particular pasts have been memorialized and encoded to foster status differentiations that have persisted for centuries. These differentiations have contributed to the presence of discriminated demographic clusters enduring various degrees of inter-group tensions. As argued by Cancian, discriminated access to the government, economic opportunities, and educational resources shape the orientation of a community, eventually causing shifts in its overall identity (1965, 1992). Persisting differentiations therefore can lead to strained social dynamics which promote a devotion to historical affiliations rather than a commitment to a shared citizenship.

Yelvington, in his work on Trinidad, confirmed that people are defined in relation to their identity not only through an 'internal' feeling of commonality, but also through 'external' and socially imposed structural criteria such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, and religion. These markers interact to outline a context where access to power and privilege can be either enabled or restricted (1995). These social relations of subordination and superordination are also translated into a structural foundation along which each collectivity is organized. Clearly, the fact that race is an ideological construct does not exclude its having real consequences.

Trinidad for centuries has been stratified along racial lines and relationships between race and other social markers has been thoroughly documented (Braithwaite, 1975; Harewood, 1971; Harewood and Henry, 1985;

La Guerre ed., 1974; Oostindie, 1996; Premdas, 1993, 1995; Ryan, 1972, 1991, 1995; Singh, 1994; M.G. Smith, 1984; R.T. Smith, 1976; Vertovec, 1992, 1995; Williams, 1966; Yelvington, 1993, 1995). Although this author recognizes the reasons behind using the dimension of race in a case study of social plurality, anthropology has demonstrated that biologically all people are mixed to various degrees. Humans interbreed, and hybrid populations are continually generated. This evidence has made racial categories biological fictions and race a scientific classification device of limited value.

In Trinidad hybridization has been actively shaping the racial profile of the local community. This process has made phenotypic traits increasingly irrelevant in defining racial membership. Such reality is forcing group members to recognize themselves, and to be recognized by outsiders, through alternative rules of belonging based on cultural dimensions rather than biological ones. Clothes may become uniforms, traditional songs group anthems, religious practices ties to the past, and artistic expressions major avenues for self-definition.

This research suggests that ethnicity rather than race, is a more useful analytical frame and follows Nash's approach in its study. "The study of ethnicity needs to be rooted in a definite time period, with an eye to the malleability of the combination of elements that go into its construction at different times and places, all with a sensitivity to the continuum of cultural-political-natural which also has a dynamic shaped history, circumstance,

politics, and economics. In short, the study of ethnicity is an attempt to study all of social sciences under one single rubric" (1989).

The section below introduces a historical overview of ethnic perspectives in the literature and elaborates in some detail three theories commonly used to explain Caribbean societies: the plural society school, the stratification school, and the plantation society school.

PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNICITY

Anthropological work in Trinidad started with the Herskovitses (1947) and Mishener (1958) and focused on the predominance of African-derived practices and the Afro-Caribbean connection. This perspective treated the Caribbean as part of a larger Afro-American region and emphasized dynamics of cultural retention. Through fieldwork in Brazil, Suriname, and Haiti, Herskovits identified cultural similarities with Africa. He compared religions such as Haitian Voodoo and Trinidadian Shango, and pointed out syncretistic elements between African symbolism and an imposed Christianity (1937). He also observed that in contexts where syncretism was not an option, actors negotiated practices in a way that specific features could still be perpetuated. For example, Herskovits named serial monogamy among blacks in the New World as a reinterpretation of African polygyny (1959).

In the 1950's, Klass's fieldwork produced the first monographs of a Trinidadian Indian village. Much like Herskovits, he put forward the value of cultural persistence by demonstrating that diasporic Indians were able to transplant a communal life that reflected their original society (1961). Similar works by Clarke (1986) and Niehoff and Niehoff (1960) emphasized the stability of the Indian identity and the role of the historical past. Years later Klass identified the continuous stream of indentured workers entering Trinidad until 1917 as the main mechanism allowing the Indian community to resist assimilation for much longer than other groups (1991). Notwithstanding the value of these ethnographies, these works obfuscated the relevance of the interactions taking place with the wider society and ignored the cultural feedback between all coexisting local groups.

Centered on the legacy of colonial and imperialist domination, field scientists like Furnivall expressed their scholarly authority in describing Third World societies. Furnivall's concept of a plural society stems from his economic analysis of colonial Southeast Asia in the 1940's. He believed that in a plural society different segments of the population are formed and kept apart through occupational specialization. Furnivall's claim that assimilation was unlikely to take place rested on the premises that in colonial contexts groups lacked shared values and a common will. He also emphasized the role that artificial mechanisms put in place by the politically dominant group had in cementing discrete collectivities and in avoiding societal breakdown.

Colonial governments, however, benefited from keeping groups dependent and separate through occupational monopolies, and often justified their political strategies of domination as mechanisms preventing ethnic unrest (Furnivall, 1944, 1948). Today, the political survival of a large number of newly independent Caribbean countries, including Trinidad, has shown the limits of the pluralist perspective. The fact that the post-colonial era of many West Indian nations witnessed widespread patterns of assimilation suggests that this school of thought underestimated the presence of relevant integrative factors.

Following Furnivall's ideological path, M.G. Smith applied the pluralist concept specifically to Caribbean societies (1960, 1965, 1974). His investigation focused more on the foundation of cultural pluralism than on the social consequences of economic inequalities. He emphasized the role in plural societies of cultural determinism and a lack of consensus on societal norms. These factors encourage the persistence, among cultural groups, of separate and distinct social institutions. He later addressed the issue of social change and argued that separate collectivities can turn a society from pluralistic to homogeneous upon gaining equal access to the dominant political institutions and transforming their own institutions into compatible ones (1991). He did not explain, however, how groups excluded on the basis of cultural differences would enter the political participation process that is necessary to build compatible institutions. Finally, Smith viewed the

connection between culture and nationalism as highly problematic in that the absence of common ideologies would prevent the growth of nationalistic feelings and a West Indian nation.

Other scholars also used the pluralist approach to analyze Caribbean social organizations (La Guerre, 1974, 1982; Ryan ed., 1988; Ryan ed., 1991), and their models have ranged between extreme positions. Some stated that collectivities, although in contact with one other, maintain their distinctiveness forever. Others emphasized inter-group feedback and the partial preservation of ethnic identities resulting from reciprocal interactions.

Theorists of the stratification school, for example, developed their analysis along a pluralistic model that de-emphasized Smith's focus on institutions and rather recognized the presence of a societal consensus among collectivities. Braithwaite (1960, 1975), R.T. Smith (1988), Deosaran (1987a, 1987b), and Nevadomsky rejected the salience of cultural persistence and documented an ongoing accommodation in social, religious, and educational practices. Unlike Klass's early fieldwork, Nevadomsky's follow-up research in the Indian village of Amity confirmed a pattern of changes even despite Indian resistance to new marriage practices, gender roles, and family values. These changes were reflected in the increasing acceptance among Indians of mainstream culture, inter-ethnic conjugal unions, and a growing participation in the dominant Western-Creole-Christian society (1980, 1983).

Deosaran (1987a, 1987b) and Stewart (1986) pointed out that Caribbean complex demography has been producing both elements of conflict and cohesion, and acknowledged the interplay of cleavages as well as mutual adjustments. Braithwaite's work also recognized this apparently contradictory interplay in black/white relations, but underestimated the relevance of interculturalization between Indians and the mainstream. He treated the Indian community as an ethnic enclave and recorded its mobilization as the struggle of a minority adapting to the African host society. Such limited understanding of Indian historical subordination prevented a thorough assessment of the impact of this community on the wider society as well as of its political action (1960, 1975).

Ideological variations within the assimilationist theme ranged from a Euro-centric view where a First World conformity-template is provided for adoption by other societies, to expressions of a 'melting pot' where all groups, including the dominant one, are transformed into a totally new entity (Newman, 1973). In the case of the Caribbean, the stratification school identified Creolization as a useful tool for the development of national integration. Initially defined as the embracing by successive generations of Africans of values derived mostly from the colonial setting, Creolization offered the imagery of an evolving regional wholeness. It is possible that these hybridization processes permeating West Indian societies contributed to a relatively peaceful coexistence between a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Assimilationist ideas also rested on the assumption that ethnic identity represented an archaic form of social organization. They emphasized the forceful impact of global connectedness, consumerism, and technology (Plattner, 1989) and predicted that in modern industrial societies historical identities would be replaced by meritocratic criteria. This perspective asserted that a milieu of advanced communication and a growing literate and mobile humanity would ease cultural blending and global homogenization. Relying on studies conducted on successfully assimilated groups, supporters argued that the removal of legal barriers and the creation of equal opportunities in employment, education, and housing are major factors speeding up assimilation.

Although assimilationists have been using indicators such as cultural accommodation, intermarriage rates, and socioeconomic mobility as evidence that assimilation will eventually make the issue of ethnicity irrelevant, the 'melting pot' ideology has never been universally accepted. Widespread data documenting ethnic persistence have not been ignored and recent scholarship has strongly questioned whether the disappearance of the ethnic issue is a realistic expectation. By the 1970's even some assimilationists admitted their difficulty in reconciling the limited success, for example, of blacks' entrance in the U.S. mainstream. In 1970 Glazer and Moynihan voiced their beliefs in ethnic persistence in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, and later they recognized that ethnicity involves both situational interests as well as affective ties (1975).

Novak wrote an even more provocative book, *The Rise of Unmeltable Ethnics* (1971), and works by pluralists such as Gordon (1975), Greeley (1974), Hacker (1992), Kivisto (1995), Kuper and Smith (1969) and van den Berghe (1978, 1981) further expressed skepticism on the potential for assimilation.

Following the lines of culinary images, the U.S. 'melting pot' ethnic structure has been re-characterized as soup or a salad, and even today's Trinidad is usually described as a *calaloo*, a typical dish with an unending list of ingredients. Although often praised for their peaceful coexistence and despite the accommodation processes, Trinidadians have shown a marked resistance to 'melting' and persist in demarcating their respective historical experiences. While a fragmentation of meanings and interpretations can be quite fascinating for the scholar, the multi-vocality flourishing in Trinidad has also stimulated conflicting group interests as well as antagonistic ethnic relations.

Pursuing an economic focus, the plantation society school criticized the emphasis on ethnic retention found in early anthropological works on the Caribbean, and proposed a social structural analysis based on the use of a plantation framework (Beckford, 1972, 1974; Best, 1968; Mintz, 1959; Rubin, 1960; Williams, 1962). This institution was considered not just as an economic device, but also as the foundation for the entire social structure. Later work by Mintz identified cultural and economic elements of plantation systems as the common components throughout the Caribbean area (1971).

Plantation models removed ethnicity from the limelight. Moreover, Beckford's inclusion of dominant-submissive patterns of interactions acknowledged the presence of various forms of psychological dependency and their role in hampering societal transformations (1972). Major weaknesses in these economic models include their generalizing plantation societies under one typology as well as an underestimating of the actors' ability to influence the system and bring changes. Furthermore, although economic dependency persisted under other guises, the eventual decline of the plantation system necessarily called for new conceptualizations.

Notwithstanding that Caribbean societies witnessed a certain overlap between ethnic membership and class position, the concepts of class and ethnicity require being constructed together, rather than one dependent of the other. The correlation between collectivities and occupational roles in multi-ethnic societies was explored by Bonacich. Bonacich and Modell also recognized a primordial element of ethnicity, but advanced that a shared ancestry has never precluded intra-ethnic conflicts which, in the modern world, frequently coincide with class conflict (1980).

The centre-periphery model linked ethnic segregation with the internal division of labor and examined the phenomenon of ethnicity in terms of an uneven worldwide diffusion of industrialization. Here, ethnic solidarity was explained in terms of a reaction by the underdeveloped 'periphery' to the socially and economically dominant 'centre' (Wallerstein, 1974).

Along a similar focus on economics, a variety of Marxist paradigms suggested that factors like ethnicity and culture are mere epiphenomena functioning as smoke-screens and creating a false consciousness. Marxist theorists recognized the emergence of class-based allegiances and the power of industrialization to weaken ethnic attachments. However, they also held that ethnic antagonisms continue to serve dominant groups' interest in keeping other social strata fragmented and more easily controllable.

There is no need to dispute the importance of creating a societal description that takes into consideration the processes of production, the distribution of resources, and the structures of power. However, Marxist approaches have been inadequate in dealing with the social intricacy characterizing multi-ethnic societies like the ones found throughout the Caribbean. Here, the nature and function of these economies need to be understood in relation to unique historical contexts where ethnic antagonisms cannot be regarded as simple byproducts of class dynamics.

Other classics on ethnicity provided a foundation upon which the bulk of ethnic investigation was built (Barth, 1969; Despres, 1975; Gordon, 1964, 1969, 1975; Myrdal, 1944; Park, 1949). These works defined ethnicity and prejudice, approached the issue of ethnic assimilation and discrimination, and offered insights into what multi-ethnic populations experience via symbols, artistic expressions, family patterns, occupational preferences, and so on.

Reflecting an ongoing interest in ethnic and racial assimilation theories already popularized at the beginning of the 20th century by the play *The Melting Pot*, Gordon published *Assimilation in American Life* (1964). Here he defined assimilation as a cycle that immigrant groups may undergo to different degrees in order to adapt to a new, host society. He also elaborated the details of these processes based on an assimilation scheme, which included different types of 'relation cycles' such as cultural, structural, and marital assimilation (1969). The consequences of these cycles were observed as ranging from extreme positions of amalgamation to different degrees of cultural persistence.

Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* focused on the symbolic boundaries defining ethnic groups, rather than on the enclosed cultural elements (1969). His approach identified the primary condition of ethnicity in the boundary-building process and suggested that ethnic differences were not to be found through comparisons of trait inventories, but rather through the study of inter-group relations. The relevance of this approach lay in its shifting ethnicity as a reified concept to ethnicity as social dynamics between groups.

Eriksen's review of Barth's perspective underlined how it replaced substance with form, static with dynamics, properties with relationships, and structure with processes (1992). This *modus operandi* opened the path to a type of social investigation that viewed collectivities as ever-changing entities and ethnicity as just one aspect of their complex interactions.

Barth's revolutionary perspective, however, belittled the cultural content per se and downplayed the role cultural accouterments such as language, religion, and artistic forms have in perpetuating ethnic solidarity through time. His a-historical approach limited its concern to the spatial/boundary dimension of ethnicity and ignored the wider historical context, including the origin of a community or the ways it clings to its past.

On the contrary, primordialists such as Shils (1957), Geertz (1973), and van den Berghe (1981, 1986) emphasized the temporal dimension of ethnicity. They defined ethnicity as an immutable sentiment binding group members to a shared ancestor as well as to one another through ties of kinship. Although van den Berghe strongly relied on biological pre-dispositions, primary importance was attributed to a common historical origin, to mechanisms involved in group-maintenance, and to the integration and transmission of shared values. Primordialists identified modernization and the increasing anonymity of industrialized societies with the resurgence of ethnic and nationalistic sentiments, rather than their disappearance. Critics of this school pointed out that, although the 'affective' element of ethnicity certainly plays a part in group interactions, primordialists have ignored the relational component of ethnicity as well as the relevance of the situational contexts out of which ethnic and national identities develop.

Anthony Smith is a historicist who suggested that ethnicity is rooted in a long and continuous historical process the backdrop of which includes both

symbolic elements and socio-economic variables (1991, 1994). In contrast to mainstream primordialists, he maintained that there is no causal relation between ethnicity, nationalism, and modernization. On the contrary, even assuming a link between the recent emergence of ethnic and national consciousness, the advance of science, and the decline of religion, the salience of these feelings waxes and wanes in recurring historical cycles. Smith however suggested that people are increasingly confronted with the dilemma of rationality versus religiosity, and that the solution to this crisis of 'dual legitimization' is often found in the renewal of an ethnic identity and the revival of past mores and attitudes. "Ethnicity is a potent model for human association which is not obliterated in the construction of modern nations" (1986:x).

The instrumentalist perspective is generally presented in opposition to the primordialist one. This approach explored the politicization of ethnicity in strategies of inter- and intra-group domination and identified cultural contexts as the place for expressions of political differences. Cohen defined ethnic groups as informal political groups (1974, 1976) and recognized the British Nottin' Hill Carnival as a stage where ethnic practices are informed by the calculus of economic self-interest and political advantage (1993). The major criticism against the instrumentalist approach has been centered on its inability to explain the persistence of ethnic groups even beyond temporary alliances and changing contexts.

In competitive situations or in accounts of social stratification, ethnicity can also be seen as a shifting identification, where individuals and groups conveniently adjust their ascriptions in light of different circumstances. As contexts and situations evolve, continuous re-definitions of ethnicity take place. Royce-Peterson's *Ethnic Identity* confirmed that ethnicity is developed, displayed, manipulated, or ignored in accordance with contextual demands (1982).

Modernist works by Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1990), and Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) also acknowledged the presence of manipulative processes within cultural traditions and ethnic sentiments. *The Invention of Tradition* posited that the need for traditions arises when rapid societal transformations weaken the patterns for which old traditions were designed (1983). These ritual practices, although presented as replications of ancestral ones, are actually adaptations to new environments.

Hobsbawm and Ranger also identified cultural traditions and ethnic sentiments as survival mechanisms adopted by the dominant hierarchies of industrial systems. Through this co-option, values and norms of behavior tailored to suit the ideology of the elite can be inculcated (1983).

As a response to societies being increasingly fragmented by the effects of industrialization, Anderson argued for the formation of 'imagined' communities of similarity and inclusion. Her work invoked cultural-linguistic homogeneity and the spreading of printed technologies to explain an

anonymous type of connection. These bonds develop between individuals who do not interact with one another but rather form 'imagined' links among themselves and within an 'imagined' community. Sub-national identities and nation formation therefore, involve a process of triangulation between dominant powers, a potentially evolving nationalistic ideology, and local collectivities (1983).

Similarly in Trinidad, ethnic groups find a source for their signification against an 'imagined' nation. The nation becomes the converging point for very specific agendas whose ideological means of legitimacy rest on an imagined nationalistic ideology. This notion is elaborated by a state power whose goals and interests may set imperatives that run counter to the benefit of certain collectivities. As shown throughout this research, the nation building process undertaken in Trinidad certainly incorporates both a genuine, popular enthusiasm as well as a systematic instilling of opportunistic nationalist concepts. The following chapters trace the unfolding of these nationalistic and ethnic delineations as they evolve through informal channels such as mass celebrations and artistic expressions.

CONCLUSIONS

In Trinidad, disparate forces have been contributing to the ongoing process of ethnic and national identity-making: generations have passed by,

radical political and social changes have occurred, relations of production have altered, and gender patterns have shifted. Particularly in this diasporic and multi-ethnic context, stressing the dynamic component of social forces facilitates the understanding of processes of transformation, reorganization, and revitalization that are so typical of immigrant collectivities (Nagel, 1994).

As elaborated in the following chapters, in Trinidad the widespread adoption of traditional cultural and religious elements has resulted in the construction of well-defined ethno-religious identities. However, it is the daily contact between variegated historical pasts that has functioned as the major catalyst for the articulation of uniquely complex identities. Partly due to this cultural chaos, the local ethnic and nationalistic discourse has been carrying the stamp of a creativity typifying communities immersed in a multi-vocal and quickly shifting social milieu.

In the process of analyzing how individual and collective selves are constructed, this research aligns itself with both situationalist and instrumental perspectives. The social actors' conscious manipulation of the surrounding social reality is recognized, and emphasis is given to the presence of options available against a multi-layered and dynamic background. Here, even ethnic ascriptions are perceived as flexible and their relevance negotiated depending upon current political and other circumstances.

Trinidadians, for example, have been celebrating their historic affiliations through street festivals and religious rituals that retain forms of

reference to the their respective motherlands. Yet, while diasporic groups in the New World perceive their practices as extensions of their native traditions, they are actually articulating responses to well-defined, current priorities. In the case of Indians in Trinidad, local theologian Sankeralli explained that their struggle is not about the politics of going back to India, but of defining an 'Indian-ness' authentically rooted in the Caribbean landscape (1995). Self-definition, therefore, becomes not a case of cultural preservation, but rather a conscious articulation between retention and adaptation.

Discussing ethnicity and nationalism also raises issues of cultural homogenization and economic and political interdependency. Uniform education, global communications, the dominance of monetary economies, consumerism, TV soap operas, music videos, and so on have become worldwide common denominators. As explained in the following chapters, the peculiarities of the Trinidadian context operate within the pressures of an impinging internationalized economic system. The result is that hybridization and acculturation are both present alongside pluralism and localization.

This research explores ways in which variegated forces at times support, and at times undermine identities bound to a particular spatial and temporal frame. More importantly, it recognizes that all these apparently contradictory processes are actually inter-linked and that the result of their dynamics is the formation of a social space that is constantly shrinking and expanding.

CHAPTER V

COMPETING FORCES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

The confluence of different populations has made the little island of Trinidad a fascinating sociological case. Here Amerindians struggled to survive the harshness of colonization, Africans endured slavery, poor whites faced relocation sometimes on petty crimes penal sentences, and Indians, Chinese, and Portuguese suffered indentureship. Through political exile people of French ancestry escaped the guillotine of the French revolution or the massacres of the Haitian one and Syrians, Lebanese, and Jews found asylum to avoid the religious turmoil in their native countries.

In a national context of entangled group relations, fiscal instability, and rapidly changing market dynamics, these populations have competed for limited opportunities and power. Although relatively peacefully and through shared rules of formal politics and civil society, they are to this day articulating their differences. Expressions of suspicion and fear as well as group consciousness persist in job activities and educational curriculums, artistic forms and religious celebrations, political membership and employment preferences, marriage patterns and monetary transactions.

In this ethnically heightened milieu, the making of a national identity is increasingly dominated by means of economic control that have shifted from overt colonialism to cultural globalization and modernization. The presence of financial conglomerates whose strategies often rely on the maintenance of inexpensive peripheral production sites and the transfer of high profits to the center further complicates the local economic and political climate.

In the new millennium, development has become a must and leaders of small countries like Trinidad are often forced to compromise the local fiscal agenda in order to obtain capital and loan aids from international monetary institutions. Cutting across national boundaries new bourgeoisies are forming a megacore, supranational elite, while workers worldwide are left enduring a shared market characterized by competing wages. How is a small nation-state like Trinidad negotiating its position within the world system? Are there survival strategies where localism and distinctiveness can contend with the powerful resources of foreign economic control and cultural domination?

Through a multi-layered analysis involving national, collective, and individual practices, this chapter introduces the forces at play and the debate surrounding their juxtaposing notions. It also investigates potential mechanisms able to guarantee forms of group cooperation leading to the peaceful survival of a struggling developing country.

TRINIDADIAN ECONOMIC HISTORY AND GLOBALIZATION

For centuries Trinidad's plural society has shown a tendency towards the distribution of ethnic groups along specific occupational sectors and economic activities. Training and transfer of skills from one generation to the other have perpetuated a near-monopoly of particular lines of practices only recently challenged by groups previously excluded. Following a segmented economic participation encouraged throughout colonial times, agriculture and small entrepreneurship have been associated with Indians, the civil service and industry with Africans, commerce with Chinese, Syrians, and Portuguese, and management with whites and Creoles.

This economic predicament has also affected the spatial distribution of the local communities, which have often aligned themselves along an urban/rural dichotomy. In particular, a post-emancipation African lifestyle has been associated with government public housing and urban sprawls. These adaptations have been traditionally juxtaposed against an Indian concentration near the sugar estates and throughout the rural areas. Here, since the 1800's, isolated Indian peasants and squatters formed homogeneous communities and at first lived on subsistence cultivation. Soon, however, even small farmers responded to the demand for cash crops and integrated themselves into the global market. Rural villages emerged from the plantation system as part of a mercantile, and later capitalist, trade economy. This early

participation of Trinidad in the global system quickly transformed the little nation-state into a cosmopolitan center.

In spite of these modernizing pulls, the local work force continued to see an overlap between ethnic taxonomies and labor divisions. In the 20th century the ascent of oil came to symbolize the ascent of Africans just as the decline of sugar symbolized the perpetual marginalization of Indians. This symbolic association between the two major groups and industries favored an ongoing interpretation of the fate of the two industries through distorting ethnic lenses.

As mentioned by Birth, however, occupational settings slowly started to characterize age-cohorts rather than ethnic collectivities only (1993). The 1930's were characterized by a crop failure crisis caused by the witches-broom disease; the 1940's witnessed the U.S. presence and an economy centered on its military bases. The post-WWII years saw a return to agriculture until the entrance of PNM in the 1960's on the political stage brought to a dominance of the public sector. In the 1970's the government and foreign investors supported local development projects and the 1980's recession erased most of the newly created jobs forcing workers to return to agriculture. The 1990's finally witnessed a booming economy as well as the opening of opportunities in previously untapped sectors like tertiary industries.

Until the 1980's the groups in power, the British first and Afro-Creoles later, were not the ones dominating important productive sectors such as

agriculture and trade (the first mainly dominated by Indians, the second also including Chinese, Syrians, and Portuguese). This unequal distribution of economic resources among ethnic groups fomented conflicting relations based on real, as well as perceived, discrimination over access to employment opportunities. A segmented economic participation and divergent economic interests brought uneven growth rates among sectors, which contributed, to this day to ethnic and class antagonisms.

A small elite and foreign agenda has dominated post-colonial Trinidad. Based on an imperialist control relying on economic rather than military means, First World powers have maintained their interests in the Caribbean through collaboration with burgeoning local governments. In Trinidad, the growing Afro-Creole elite has continued for decades to identify itself with the West. In particular, the U.S. cultural onslaught has been prevailing to such a degree that many are viewing the Trinidadian 'Afro-Saxon' elite as the cultural broker for outside ideologies. The Afro-Creole political cadre that succeeded the colonial powers, in fact, did not disrupt the center-periphery type relation developed throughout the British experience, but rather accommodated foreign investors' and transnational corporations' interests.

The immediate post-independence years witnessed an economic setback of the African dominated PNM government. Budget deficits, deteriorating external accounts, and the fiasco of the appropriated Puerto

Rican economic model 'Industrialization by Invitation'¹ supported by the party in power led to violent unrests. Unpopular austerity programs followed the dismal economic failure and only a state of emergency declared by the government contained a 1970 attempted army *coup d'etat*. Two factors contributed to the political survival of the PNM: the U.S. social movements for Civil Rights and Black Power, and the 1974 local petroleum boom. The former ignited feelings of African unity, encouraged a cultural renaissance, and rejuvenated a dormant sense of ethnic pride among the local African community. The discovery of oil and natural gas removed Trinidad from an agriculture-based economy and propelled it into the industrial world.

Oil refineries and related chemical industries transformed the original cash crop economy into an industrializing one. The oil bonanza turned Trinidad into one of the Caribbean islands with the highest per capita income and facilitated the rapid expansion of an African middle class. Concurrently, Indians started to migrate from the countryside to compete for new job opportunities opening up in the cities. Their increased interest and participation in traditionally African activities such as politics and white-collar jobs further strained Afro/Indian relations.

This rapid economic growth contributed to create socio-cultural inequalities typical of countries undergoing an overnight technological and

¹ 'Industrialization by Invitation', or 'Operation Bootstrap' had hoped to create a proliferation of jobs, however the large capital intensive industrialization programs failed to deliver these expectations (Ryan, 1974).

industrial outburst. The booming economy was marked by the presence of an unprepared and unskilled mass of African and Indian laborers and by foreign investments the profits of which were only partly re-utilized for the benefit of the island (Braithwaite, 1975). Within the global economic scheme, local elites accommodated outside interests and perpetuated a relation of subordination. This strategy was based on types of ventures, loans, contracts, and agreements that on the long run prolonged Trinidad's economic instability.

These factors, as well as the challenges posed by Indians' new economic and political role, spurred occupational antagonisms, and when in 1981 the oil prices collapsed, a major fiscal and social crisis gripped the country. The global market depression coincided with decreased local oil reserves, and Trinidad was brought again into recession.

Today, globalization and diversification are altering the labor lines and social contours of the country. Social mobility is strongly valued among all ethnicities and even for the most traditional Indian segment the achieved rank is becoming more relevant than ascribed statuses. A redistribution of wealth and political power are creating neighborhoods that are class, rather than ethnic based, while the scale of the enterprises and the market-oriented goal of profit making are replacing traditions of patronage. A rapidly expanding tertiary sector, including light manufacture, transportation, public services, and tourism is contributing to Trinidad's recent economic resurgence.

Clearly, the country's historical integration into the marketplace, as well as its relatively stable government have secured this little island a place in the world system. Moreover, the accouterments of modernity are breaking internal barriers of time and space and are contributing a common cultural idiom. This trend is providing a solid ground where group distinctions are mediated within socially acceptable mechanisms, and the definition of a Trinidadian citizenry inclusive of all ethnic differences is being somehow peacefully negotiated.

A transnational movement of people, ideas, and goods is making obsolete the concept of bounded cultures as well as any strict correspondence between specific geographies and histories. In Trinidad, the homogenizing agencies of capitalism have impacted the local community at various levels and increased mixed marriages are sustaining the path towards amalgamation. In particular, the phenomenon of the growing *Douglas* population is altering both the local social classification criteria as well as the country representation of itself to the outside world.

Still, Barth reminds us that a flow of personnel across ethnic boundaries is not enough to eliminate the boundaries themselves (1969). Diversification in Trinidad has been a constant throughout history and has drawn lines separating ethnic groups, laborers and businessmen, peasants and landowners, natives and outsiders. I observed during my fieldwork that in spite of the blurring processes described above, ethnic notions and practices

remain active. As suggested by Appadurai, the tension between global, national, communal, and individual forces is conducive to social confusion, alienation, and unconformity (1990). This is also the case of Trinidad, where the experience of particularism and differentiation is complicated by processes of globalization and homogenization.

NATIONALISM

A heterogeneous community lacking shared biological or ethnic affiliations is basically a community founded on the concept of citizenship. For this reason, missing unifying national sentiments can hamper the ability of groups to project their future along a shared ideological path. In Trinidad, the persistence of ethnic tensions confirms that even after independence the proclaimed citizenship status did not overshadow local group loyalties. Steward argued that these loyalties generate a dissociation that is hostile to a univocal conceptualization of an incipient nation-state (in Ryan ed., 1991).

Controversies over the definition of 'Trinidadian-ness' have dominated the political discourse for decades, while the formation of a specific social arena has circumscribed limits and possibilities for each collectivity. Ethnic phenomena are in fact context dependent. Ideas of citizenry to some degree prefigure the nature of the interaction of ethnic groups with the state. As a result, nation-building processes may operate within or against the state,

depending upon the positioning in which specific groups find themselves within the national organizational scheme.

At present, Trinidad nationalism is still not strongly ingrained in the local civil society and debates over its form and content persist. Africans have been particularly vehement in blaming Indians for lacking a positive identification with Trinidad. The so-called 'cricket syndrome' refers to the phenomenon where local Indians cheer for the Indian cricket team visiting from India rather than the West Indian one (Figure 6). This practice has been used as evidence of Indians' weak attachment to Trinidad.

The conclusion that follows within the African community is that, whereas Indians are not expressing a strong bond to their adopted island, Trinidad 'belongs' to the Africans. They are the ones who first entered bureaucracy, and it is the African political elite that fought to define the country's socio-political and juridical profile. As a result, the post-independence Afro-Creole elite shaped a nationalistic identity that coincided mostly with the African one. This state of affairs allowed Africans' ideals to overlap with the alleged national culture, which legitimized a synecdoche between African and Trinidadian.

By contrast Indians, especially if not Christian, until recently have been forced to move within a foreign cultural ambit. Because 'Trinidadian-ness' is associated with an African value system they do not share, many Indians experience national allegiance as a problematic issue. The dilemma is mainly

centered around an imposed dichotomy between being Indian and Trinidadian at the same time. Furthermore, even Indians willing to adapt to the ideological mainstream are often perceived as potential threats to the proclaimed Trinidadian identity evoked by Africans. Conservative elements of the African community view Creolized Indians with suspicion and resist their assimilative attempts fearful of a re-conceptualization of citizenry, which until recently did not include an Indian component.

Today, the presence of Indians in what used to be the African bureaucratic stronghold as well as in the broader national life is challenging the criteria used to construct citizenship. Relying on universal education, administrative regulation, and consensus over the political system, Trinidadians have been communicating differences among each other within a relatively peaceful environment. The result is that behaviors, attitudes, and values manifesting links with a variety of historical identities are increasingly included in the ongoing discourse over the definition of patriotic notions.

More importantly, the ethnic boundaries along which Trinidadian society could crack may shift to those of class. An example of the increased relevance of economic differentiation was presented by the 1990 attempted *coup d'etat* by the Islamic *Jamaat al-Muslimeen* group of *imam* Yasin Abu Bakr. This act of defiance against a corrupt and unpopular government was conveniently misrepresented by the officialdom as a religiously based extremist attack. Such manipulation brought to light the establishment's

strategy to underplay the immediacy of economic problems and to force non-ethnic issues into the ethnic discourse.

Ignited by an ongoing land dispute, the *Muslimeens* capitalized on the population's appalled reaction to the government's plan to invest a half-million dollars to build a monument. Choosing a violent and bloody means to pursue an idealistic vision certainly tarnished Bakr's self-proclaimed championship of the oppressed and diminished his chances for any long-term political attainment. However, the action brought to light economic issues the government had been ignoring. These included the widening economic gap between rich and poor, the growing alienation of the unemployed and uneducated urban youth, and drug related problems of corruption involving government officials (*Trinidad Express Newspapers Limited*, 1990).

During the six days of the siege and the holding hostage of government members, the official press emphasized the religious fanaticism and the ethnic character of the rebellious group, which was over 90 percent African and Muslim. Yet, Abu Bakr's commitment to the poor and oppressed masses gained considerable support from different ethnic segments of the population. In fact, had the *coup* succeeded, the country's interim Prime Minister nominated by the militant Muslim group would have been of Indian descent. A local joke that circulated soon after the captors shot the then African Prime Minister Robinson in his foot well summarizes the true motivation behind the

***Muslims'* political action. Why did Abu Bakr shoot the Prime Minister in the foot instead of killing him? So now the Minister has a good reason for dragging his feet on the nation's problems!**

The whole affair however, brought forward not only issues of bad government or religious fundamentalism (depending upon the point of view), but rather the presence of sections of the population that did not recognize the rules of democratic living. During the siege, some people looted warehouses and stores, and a good portion of the capital city and other surrounding towns were burnt down. Clearly not the entire citizenry feels a sense of belonging to the national community. These circumstances suggest that the dilemma of what constitutes being Trinidadian permeates various segments of the civil society. Differentiating lines may actually run along class rather than ethnic boundaries.

In the attempt of unifying extremely divided identities under a single umbrella of civic ideals, the government is actively pursuing a state-organized nationalistic agenda. This propaganda is conducted through street parades, celebrations, cultural programs, and mass events which, however, do not always stimulate the general population's spontaneous patriotic sentiments. Instead, many people question the authenticity of the government's patriotic scheme.

Opinions about the success of these unifying efforts by the government range widely. Trotman, for example, suggested that Indians remain outsiders

and continue to be seen as a clan not fully Trinidadian. They are treated as usurpers who are stealing the patrimony of the real Trinidadians, those of African descent (Ryan ed. 1991). Others, such as Ahye, call attention to the increasing acculturation and intermarrying especially among the well-educated Christianized Indians and Africans (Ryan ed., 1991). I argue that the last decade has witnessed a trend where the Indian community has clearly pledged its allegiance to the nation and is slowly gaining a legitimacy the wider society had denied for centuries.

HYBRIDISM

The issue of hybridization (or miscegenation) arose with the inevitable contact between different populations. By the beginning of the 1400's, the global expansion of Western Europeans went hand in hand with the making of a framework that both demarcated and assigned differential values to human groups. Hybridity incorporates notions of mixed cultural or physical manifestations such ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, and so on. In the wake of the recent post-modern experience, the term hybridity has acquired a dominant position in any deconstructive and re-classificatory analysis. Vis-à-vis a predominant ethnic discourse strongly relying on clearly constructed identities, hybridity stands as a critique to what has been historically defined as 'normalcy' or the propriety of ethnic purity.

Although the status of the hybrid changes in each society, within this orthodox perspective of ethnic purity mixed individuals are perceived as abnormal, transient, socially uprooted, and mentally unstable. The gatekeepers of legitimacy dismiss them as sources of social pollution (Nakashima, 1992). Said, in his critique of imperialism, mentions the paradox of believing in a society where there are pure whites, blacks, Westerners or Asians. "Survival, in fact, is about connections between things, and it is our fear and prejudice that force us to maintain divisions and deny complexity. Hybridity will never fully disappear, but rather more and more mixed people will become part of a shrinking world " (1993:336). In Trinidad, hybrid individuals are the fastest growing segment of the population. Between 1980 and 1990 this group increased 12.0 percent while Africans decreased 2.9 percent and Indians 1.0 percent (Central Statistical Census Office of Trinidad and Tobago, 1990).

Creolization

The general definition of Creolization involves reciprocal biological and cultural assimilation between two or more collectivities coming into contact. Within the historical white/colored dichotomy, the original process of Creolization in Trinidad entailed mainly cultural incorporations by the Western ideology of an Afro-centric identity and secondarily, of a detached Indian one.

Creolization has never been a smooth process nor has it resulted in social homogeneity. It rather created a continuum of degrees of phenotypic and cultural legitimacy with urban, Western and Creole forms at the top, African folk forms at the bottom, and separate from all, the Indian world.

Although facing different aspects of marginality from the white core, marginalized groups resisted their assigned status and rejected oppressive values through a number of mechanisms. Both Africans and Indians used their own cultural affirmations to resist the colonization of the 'colored' Caribbean, asserted their cultural dignity, and made a case for their legitimate place in society. The 1859 Carnival Riots, the 1881 *Canboulay* Riots, the 1884 *Hosay* Riots, are all cultural expressions adopted in the struggle for political determination and counter-Creolization/colonization. The following stanza of an early 20th century calypso expresses people's reaction to British attempts to control Carnival through the drum prohibition (from Espinets and Pitts, 1944):

*Can't beat me drum
In my own, my native land
Can't have we Carnival,
In my own, my native land
Can't have we Bacchanal,
In my own, my native land
In me own, my native land
Moen pasca dancer, comme moen viel (I cannot dance as I wish).*

In Trinidad, however, Creolization processes have not been always perceived as oppressive structures of the European colonizer attempting to break or redefine other identities conflicting with its dominant ideology. Locally, the imposition of Western norms and behaviors on the African world did not bring about the disappearance of the African culture, but rather the formation of a unique, Creole society. This process became evident especially after the 1960's and was accompanied by the inventing of traditions and symbols fostering social cohesion. Real or imagined, African and European cultural synthesis became a resource in defining memberships and building a sense of nation.

The light-skinned middle class (mainly African) often referred to as 'Rainbow People', has identified Creolization with a process of nationalization as well as with an alleged ethnically-neutral and modernized identity made available to all citizens. The Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches have been adopted by the Afro-Creole power structure as its religious core, and rather than evoking a militant 1970's Afro-centric consciousness it has professed an esthetic of lighter skin shades and cosmopolitan sensitivity. This elite has also perceived a modernized Trinidad as the norm into which local Indians, as well as all other 'reticent' collectivities needed to be assimilated.

By contrast lower-class Africans (mainly dark-skinned) have been viewing Creolization as Western ideologies being forcefully transplanted locally. They have perceived the Afro-Creole political elite (and increasingly

Indian in the last two decades) as the sell-out group manipulated by foreign mechanisms of control such as economic dependency and Westernization. For the African lower class, Creolization has meant the strengthening of an 'Afro-Saxon' elite who has maintained its power through the same entrenched class and ethnic divisions originally institutionalized by the colonial order.

Finally, an increased participation of the Indian community in the affairs of the country has made more relevant Indians' own experience of cultural Creolization. In the past, Indians have reacted to state-monitored attempts fostering Creolization by declaring their status as an oppressed minority whose traditions were not recognized. As second-rate citizens, they were offered the option of citizenry only if adopting the dominant group's cultural accouterments while losing their own.

As late as in the 1980's, thousands of Indians left Trinidad discouraged by the lack of positive results they had been trying to achieve through the legitimate means of economic and social participation. Because of more favorable economic conditions as well as a more flexible socio-cultural structure elsewhere they have not returned to their mother country but have rather chosen to migrate to the U.S. and the U.K.

Indian migration became embroiled in the debate about ethnicity and nationalism when about 15,000 nationals petitioned the Canadian Government for refugee status (*Trinidadian Guardian*, 1990). This provided a powerful testimony to the international audience of the alleged subordinate

status Indians were suffering in Trinidad. However, this move also vindicated the stereotype of Indians as disloyal to the nation of Trinidad. The ensuing debate fomented by ethnic overtones gripped the attention of alarmed Trinidadian officials. They scrambled to avoid a tarnished international reputation by suggesting that opportunistic claims of ethnic discrimination had been made to cover-up the true motives, mainly economic interests (Henry, 1993).

Today's Indians in Trinidad are rejecting a process of Creolization that forces them into an imposed value system at the expense of their own. No longer voiceless, those that remained on the island are continuing to fight a milieu where national culture was coterminous with African culture. The Indian commitment to political and social participation is altering the dynamics of the Creolization process and is developing options other than either being assimilated or being ostracized. The result is that an African/Indian dichotomous model now describes a context where the Indian identity is no longer compromised by a Trinidadian citizenry devoid of the Indian cultural element. During the last decade, the Indian community has been visibly advancing towards making Trinidad a society of their own. Furthermore the current government headed by a Hindu Prime Minister is incorporating both 'Indian-ness' into the definition of national identity, and India into Trinidad's ancestral past.

This redefinition of 'Trinidadian-ness' is also modifying an asymmetrical distribution of power that lasted for centuries. The new Indian political elite is committed to pursue a social equilibrium where a communal vision of citizenry is strengthening the internal cohesiveness of the country as well as its international standing. The success of this strategy has not been welcomed by a large segment of the population, mainly conservative Africans, which has reacted to this trend with resentment. Their resistance has been channeled through organized protest, strikes, boycotts, and art as a weapon of conflict. In the same way that changes are often unwelcome because they imply the loss of existing privileges, Africans' signs of nervousness validate Indians' claim of having been left out of the limelight for too long.

To conclude, the various interpretations of the Creolization *modus operandum* reflect the coexistence of very different societal perspectives. These views have encouraged each collectivity to face assimilation processes with various degrees of resistance. Forced within a social niche organized along an assimilation continuum, the positioning of individuals and groups have been determined in relation to their 'distance' from what is perceived to be the dominant ideology. This reference to a dominant other, however, has not been passively agreed upon, and the prerogative of categories such as Western, Trinidadian, and 'native' has been constantly questioned in a dialogue involving all segments of the wider society.

Douglarization

In Trinidad, local collectivities have been split apart by discriminatory values and stereotypical oppositions inculcated throughout years of colonization. However, while Creoles have been assigned an intermediate position between the white dominant and the 'darker' subordinate status, the *Dougla*, a mix offspring of an Indian and an African, presents a more challenging case of classification.

Originally meaning 'bastard' and 'illegitimate' in Hindi, for a long time the *Dougla* has been given a low cultural status and physical identity. The acrimony of the debate on hybridity and *Douglarization* in Trinidad has become particularly evident since the beginning of the 1990's, when archbishop Pantin publicly declared his support for inter-ethnic marriages. At the same time the NAR also proposed to establish a National Service which would have contributed to bring together youths of all ethnicities.

With the same vehemence it responded to the *chutney* music phenomenon (see chapter seven), Indian orthodox groups viewed these policies as attempts to dilute pure 'Indian-ness'. The powerful Hindu organization *Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha* attacked the National Service proposal as a biological and cultural scheme to weaken the Indian community. Its conservative manifesto rejected Creolization as a force endorsing a type of integration that would coerce Indians, but not Africans, to forego their identity.

Acculturation was perceived as a one-way process of assimilation where only the Indian culture would be compromised. The manifesto also rejected any apparently fairer form of integration, including, for example, biological mixing. The pluralism the *Mahasabha* argued for was based on: (1) distance between the two collectivities, (2) acceptance of diversities in the form of ethnic purity and, (3) integration as a force leading toward a form of equality based on separation (Puri, 1995).

Douglas, therefore, have been usually labeled by Indians as Africans and kept at the margin of the Indian community. Even if welcomed in the African camp, however, allegiance to only one group implies having to ignore the other side of a person's ancestry. This restriction may bring feelings of incompleteness and the development of culturally slanted selves. The adoption of an ethnically-neutral identity that does not silence any portion of a mixed individual would help to overcome these limitations. For example, emphasizing the affiliation with a nationalistic ideology may provide a reality where a hybrid individual is not forced to choose any one specific ethnic camp.

In Trinidad patriotic feelings are still fragile, and to this day a sense of nationalistic identification has been proven tenuous. A possible consequence of this underdeveloped nationalism includes the persistence of a *Dougla* minority unable to experience fully its ethnic and cultural potential. In Trinidad, however, marginalization has brought the *Douglas* to stubbornly defend their unique social position. Although it is naive to assume that even

displaced groups will necessarily resist existing notions of ethnic purity, *Douglas* are rejecting discrimination while adopting new values that help them to conceptualize an identity that recognizes their uniqueness. While acceptance of new ideologies and radical changes rarely comes without turmoil, *Douglas* have become conspicuous in voicing their rejection toward the socio-political status-quo. As Jameson suggested: "Hybrid genres are committed from moving away from the received brand-name system, therefore putting a new emphasis on the creation of multiple cultures rather than bounded communities " (1981:107).

In Trinidad, *Douglas*' effort of re-positioning within the wider society has the potential to induce a thorough re-assessment of the role ethnic categorization plays in the entire society. *Douglarization* is developing into a force questioning the ethnic foundation upon which the society is built, and is undermining the hegemonic structures of the center. By rejecting a historical perception of their hybridism as a form of social pollution *Douglas* agitation is beginning to de-legitimize a dominant culture based on strict ethnic categorizations and is proposing alternative and more progressive national identities. This hybrid group is disrupting orthodox inter-ethnic imageries, and is even providing new constructions of gender relations as well as femininity (see chapter seven).

In a sense, this emerging collectivity is challenging the stranglehold of traditional 'ethnic politics' and may providing the country with an option for a harmonious future. Through an emphasis on a shared African and Indian history of oppression, *Douglas* are articulating the need for egalitarian structures based on social and economic advancement in non-exclusive ethnic terms. As soca (soul+ calypso) -*chutney* singer Delamo states in his 1989 song:

*Now who come to divide and rule
(Th)eh go use we as no tool
Anytime they came racial
I Dougla, I staying neutral.*

CHAPTER VI

SECULAR EVENTS AND SYMBOLIC ACTION

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Rituals, celebrations, and other types of symbolic action pervade social practice. Many scholars coming from disciplines as diverse as anthropology, sociology, history, and economics have investigated the complexity of symbolic activity. Turner's seminal perspective on rituals viewed them as cultural forms deeply imbedded in society. He recognized the coexistence of two complementary modes of interaction: the structured day-to-day living and a generic human bond uniting people regardless of hierarchies. Through ceremonies and festivals the differences marked by the existing social frame are transcended and alternative realities are created. Boundaries are temporarily shifted and solidarity can spread among the newly delineated *communitas*. Rituals, therefore, provide a temporary solution to the paradoxes of normal everyday life (1974).

In a public context, symbols become 'positive forces in the activity field' and through their three properties of condensing (a multivocality of meaning), unifying (disparate significata), and polarizing (meanings), they induce dynamics of collection, crowd forming, and city making (Turner, 1967). The polysemic property of symbols (i.e. the fact that they often lack a definite

meaning) allows for the existence of an interpretative margin where a variety of cultural constructs can collide without challenging the original symbolic value. This margin produces dynamics that are catalysts for 'anti-structure' contexts, which facilitate the formation of a sense of community (1969).

Both Turner (1969) and Schneider (1968) pointed out that 'dominant' or 'core' symbols become part of unique configurations and are adopted collectively by groups as cultural banners. During festivals and celebrations, esthetic forms such as music, clothes, theatrical styles, dance movements, and paraphernalia function as signs that are publicly displayed to delimit a specific identity and group-membership. Along Durkheimian lines (1915, 1938), Comaroff describes festivals as instruments through which individuals, acting upon an external environment, construct themselves as social beings (1985).

Festivals are not only safety valves for societal pressures (Gluckman, 1954; Mitchell, 1956; Sachs, 1933) or channels for the transmission of values (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Turner, 1967, 1969). They are also tools for effecting changes through confronting and intimidating other segments of the society (Bailey, 1969; Manning, 1983; Moore and Myerhoff, 1977; Turner, 1974, 1982). Bell recognized these different properties of rituals by focusing on the process of ritualizing rather than on rituals per se (1992). She analyzed ritualization not as the repetitive expression of axioms, but rather as an ongoing process of consent, resistance, and negotiated appropriation through

which ideologies are constantly reworked. Rituals therefore, are opportunities creating strategies for the articulation of power.

Other scholars underlined the divisive function of celebrations. Cohen (1993), DaMatta (1991), and Mitchell (1995) confirmed that these apparent frivolous occasions can function as stages for controversial political and economic exchanges. Scott explored the way collectivities use celebrations to express consciousness, as well as how subordinate groups resist dominant elites (1990). In these public platforms and through symbolic means, people negotiate power, redress inequalities, or attempt to alter the prevailing order. As suggested by Robben, what is considered economic and non-economic is more a convention of our discipline rather than an unambiguous epistemological demarcation (1989).

Scott also identified a "public transcript", usually in the realm of the official political discourse, and a "hidden transcript", which rarely finds its way into the historical record. Between these two worlds he described another discursive layer. This layer is positioned in public view but is structured in a way that actors' identities are covered, and the content of the message is coded. Marginal groups and folk-forms frequently thrive in this liminal layer, and tales, jokes, songs, puns, euphemisms, and *double-entendres* color this subordinate niche. Carnivals, for example, with their burlesque characters and various elements of reversals, ambiguity, and mystification are the sites where feelings are expressed without fear of recrimination. Alcohol consumption,

mass assemblages, darkness, and anonymity often confer the actors a temporary immunity (Scott, 1990).

These conditions are instrumental to the definition of a realm of collective interest where personal experiences and practices acquire the strength to manipulate current issues. In this realm, individual life histories deconstruct and reorganize the surrounding milieu, and personal narratives turn into catalysts for social action. Mass events, therefore, function as multi-layered cultural stages whose responsibilities include bringing a multitude of agendas into the public domain where socio-political negotiation can be fueled (Barnes, 1988; Bell, 1992; Bourdieu, 1991; Kertzer, 1988).

Cohen's critique of the West Indian Nottin' Hill Carnival argued for the existence of a feedback mechanism tying this celebration to the political backdrop from which it emerged (Trinidad) and was exported to (U.K.) (1993). Through an historical journey of the local West Indian community and the national context, he identified how the yearly Carnival evolves out of people's identity and adapts to current social realities. By using Carnival as a base for the mobilization of political awareness, the immigrant community has been presenting on the public space cultural forms that socially engage the privileged group. In turn, this originally uninterested majority is forced to acknowledge the voiced protest and articulate a rejoining. Artistic forms and political interests, therefore, interplay in an on-going process of mediation between actors pursuing very different goals. This politicization of the arts

vouches for studying artistic expressions not only for their symbolic value, but also for the opportunistic maneuvering and power dynamics hidden within.

In line with the theoretical path presented above, my inquiry recognizes that ritual practices are not limited to an aesthetic and self-contained niche but are rather part of a complex socio-political landscape. This research, therefore, correlates cultural forms with the historical peculiarity of the actors involved, as well as the wider societal trends. It explores the concerns of identity-creation and nationalism through the lens of a variety of Trinidadian cultural practices. These practices function as catalysts for a dialogue between dominant and oppositional ideologies, in this work mainly those involving the Trinidadian government and various segments of the African and Indian communities. Through an analysis of local celebrations as well as of people's perceptions of and involvement in them, the multi-faceted role of artistic manifestations is explored. Here different ethnic identities clash or occasionally merge with each other, group boundaries are negotiated, and self-representations are constantly redefined.

Finally, rather than just focusing on the end product of ritual practices, this research adopts a diachronic approach. It examines the creation, the social interactions informing the preparatory stages, and the transformation of artistic forms due to broader societal forces. Through an exploration of the evolutionary path of certain art styles, relations between imagination, taste, and the collective cultural past are examined. While processes of

remembrance and nostalgia are basically conservative efforts, in the practical dimension they also include transformative dynamics. This work discusses how public events are appropriated as sounding boards where people conceptualize their personal memories to resist and possibly modify present realities. The following section describes a few Trinidadian celebrations and examines their role as resources whereby survival strategies, identity-building and ideological resistance are pursued.

HISTORICAL CELEBRATIONS IN TRINIDAD

Celebrations in Trinidad are numerous and diverse. Their creative component and powerful element of social action carve out special niches in the Trinidadian psyche. The secular world contributes musical extravaganzas for all tastes through cultural-heritage fairs, as well as through special days celebrating national independence, emancipation, and Indians' arrival in Trinidad. Even the sporting calendar takes on a festive air with its regattas, long-lasting cricket test matches, and a variety of sport tournaments.

These festivities, in particular those honoring significant events in the history of the peoples of the island, function as settings where political and economic interests are contended. On these occasions traditional affiliations are often woven in reinvented symbolic practices, and ethnic, nationalistic, and religious sentiments intertwine creating very complex social foci.

Indian Arrival Day commemorates the May 30th, 1845 arrival of the first indentured laborers to Trinidad. After a bewildering 100-day crossing around the Cape of Good Hope and the South Atlantic, the first 225 Indians landed in Trinidad on board the *Fatel Rozack*. Many more followed and by 1917, when indentureship was abolished, a total of 143,000 laborers had entered the island.

In the capital city of Port-of-Spain, Indian Arrival Day festivities developed in the historically Indian neighborhood of St. James. Today, however, the area is ethnically mixed and the celebrating crowd reflects, to some degree, the heterogeneity of the residents. On a stage erected for the occasion in a neighborhood park, Indian performers entertain with songs and dancing, food stands distribute free *doubles* (a popular Indian snack), and government officials make speeches to seemingly uninterested listeners. Casual conversations with Indians among this audience suggest that the event is experienced as a form of family entertainment rather than as a militant celebration of the Indian past.

More massive is the Arrival Day celebration held in Manzanilla, the beach where the *Fatel Rozack* first landed. From everywhere on the island, by car, truck, and public transportation thousands of people arrive loaded with food, camping equipment, garden furniture, and sound systems. While Indian music is blasted at unbearably loud volumes from the main stage, people under the palm-trees along the beach dance, drink, eat, and *lime* for the entire

day. Although this event has been for years a public celebration, its visibility has greatly increased with the growing Indian presence on the political scene. While some Africans, particularly those living nearby, may also attend, in Manzanilla the audience remains predominantly Indian. A number of African informants suggest that the exclusive presence of Indian artistic expressions, especially music, is a major factor in limiting Africans' participation in this occasion.

Emancipation Day is observed annually on the first of August and commemorates the end of African slavery in Trinidad in 1834. After a failed attempt to retain ex-slaves on the plantations through a five-year mandatory apprenticeship period, complete freedom was granted in 1838.

Today's Trinidadian Emancipation Day celebrations last nearly a week and include a variety of activities praising African culture. A historic stronghold of the African community and one of the largest roundabouts and open-air theatres in the world (200 yards long), the Queen's Park Savannah hosts cultural affairs attended mainly by Africans. Music, dancing, typical cuisine, and crafts, as well as lectures and fora addressing pan-African issues characterize the program. Even more than Indian Arrival Day, this is a national holiday producing an outpouring of ancestral pride within its originating community.

Another important yearly event within this commemorative week is staged on the night of Emancipation Day. Starting from the Queen's Park

Savannah, a *flambeau* procession parades through the historical African neighborhoods of La Cour Harpe, John John, Laventille and East Dry River, all known euphemistically as 'behind the bridge' (the Dry River marks the edge of these shantytowns). Participants, again exclusively Africans, carry small burning bottles filled with kerosene, where a cotton cloth dipped in the fluid acts as a wick. Accompanied by drums and a variety of percussive instruments, celebrants sing in a call-and-response format or just dance to the rhythms. The mood of the event is quite joyful and crowds from bars, restaurants, residences, and sidewalks cheer the marchers.

The procession ends at the All Stars Steelband yard, which used to be a section of housing-barracks, a few of them still standing. This is where the *Canboulay* Riots during Carnival 1881 started, and some believe that the Africans killed during the fights were buried here. In this yard the procession breaks down to form a circle where people join in prayer: African Orisha gods are called and honored, candles are lit, libations are offered, and chants are sung. A member of the community involved with the Emancipation Commission holds a speech, but no government officials participate in this event. The setup is very informal, and the keynote speaker focuses on the need for the local African community (mainly the one 'behind the bridge') to commit itself to the general good and to actively support education for the children, employment for the youth, and moral values within the family.

When I attended this celebration in 1997, a number of the marchers that had paraded in the streets did not remain for the entire speech. Furthermore, the complete absence of the Afro-Creole middle class seemed to indicate that this function attracted mainly the African poor. It was disheartening to realize that, although Trinidad has been perceived historically as a black country, so many Africans celebrated emancipation by participating only in events that were organized by the officialdom, that were held in high status venues, or that involved well known performers and professional groups. Such a selective and limited attendance in the *flambeau* procession (it did not include more than a few hundred people) also reaffirmed the presence of clear class lines within the African community.

My African middle-class informants explained this distancing as the rejection of a type of "ethnic practices inappropriate for modernized and successful professionals". Lower-class participants, instead, viewed the absence of the bourgeoisie as a reflection of their practicing a commercialized African identity comprised of trendy garbs and expensive imported native art for sale at the African village/mall.

The African village/mall just mentioned is the *Lidj Yasu Omowale* permanent model-village sponsored in 1997 by the Trinidadian government. Built to house ethnic businesses and to provide stages for artistic performances, detractors of this project see it as a way for the current Indian government to appease the middle-class African community. Intentions aside,

more than an African cultural space, the reconstructed village is characterized by a very commercial spirit where prosperous Africans can display their status through conspicuous consumption.

Finally, alternative representations to the original African core of the Emancipation Day celebrations are also ventured by some non-African elements of the local population. These latter suggest that emancipation is a humane concept that should be cherished and honored by Trinidadians of all descents. Although recognizing that slavery has been one of the harshest forms of servitude, this ideal rests on the fact that there have been other tools of oppression breaching human freedom. Serfdom, exile, and persecutions have all been part of the history of most of the populations that settled in Trinidad. Notwithstanding the validity of this notion, local Afro-centric celebrations continue to suggest the persistence of an uninformed perspective viewing bondage as a scar mainly from the African past.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE

While the African and Indian communities authenticate their specific cultural milieus, the Trinidadian government also plays its own part in maneuvering public events and pursuing its own ends. Partly due to its historical roots in a colonial system, the Trinidadian state has had difficulty fulfilling the needs and aspirations of its different collectivities. To counteract

the population's general lack of identification with nationhood, since independence the officialdom has been making major efforts to foster a feeling of citizenry.

Through sponsorship, ideals of inclusiveness are proclaimed to dispel the negative image some segments of the population have formed about the government. Part of this process of state-popularization is accomplished by employing informal channels such as nationalistic ceremonies, street parades, and sport events. These spectacles are frequently turned into composite cultural shows and tend to include artistic forms that are representative of the variegated local ethnic makeup.

Based on a variety of invented traditions, state-manipulated mass celebrations strive to portray a national identity that is fair to all its components and that displays a sense of unity within diversity. Although they provide simplistic and stereotypical models, these occasions inform audiences with notions and practices different from their own. Eriksen pointed out that these types of celebrations expose a multi-ethnic audience to a number of constructs useful in dealing with one another (1992).

Today's officialdom's concern to portray Trinidad as a unified mosaic of peoples reflects its realization that the 'melting-pot' model was not going to merge the differentiated feelings of belonging experienced by the local collectivities. Nationalistic messages can, however, redirect a population's loyalty more toward the nation than toward ethnic or personal networks. Local

identities eventually become secondary and are replaced with notions more in line with the image of an encompassing citizenry.

My fieldwork observations, however, suggest that, notwithstanding the powerful patriotic idiom imposed by the government, only occasionally do Trinidadians experience unifying sentiments. In fact, casual questions posed to friends and acquaintances as well as to bystanders attending various celebrations had people responding with very different opinions about which events actually inspire harmony and national 'one-ness'. Such alternative perspectives are based more on the characteristics of people's historical, social, and aesthetic background than on the effect of direct propaganda.

In multi-ethnic Trinidad, therefore, a differentiated population encourages an ongoing discourse centered on the legitimacy of nationalistic symbols and sentiments. In particular, a more confident Indian population is de-constructing the original post-independence nationalist identity set forth by a then predominantly African state. The following affair illustrates the pervasiveness, as well as the intensity, with which both the African and the Indian communities experience the controversy involving this process of identity re-evaluation.

On August 5th I attended the presentation of a composite cultural show organized by the political establishment on the occasion of Ghanaian President, Flt. Lt. Rawlings' visit. The Command Cultural Performance is presented at the Queen's Park Savannah to a packed, mainly African

audience. The welcoming segment includes a musical medley played by steeldrums, tassa drums, and the One World Ensemble. Then, the Master of Ceremonies announces the official opening of the event and a choir sings the two countries' anthems.

During the guest president's thank you speech he twice mentions the leader of the local opposition, Manning, and both times the traditional PNM crowd starts clapping, drumming, and cheering. Then, an African religious man pours libations on the stage floor and invokes the names of Gandhi, Mao, and some African heroes. The prayers are followed by a very elegant dance in classic Indian style. The chairman of the Emancipation Committee, K. Kamboon, reads his welcome and cites how the very first relations with Ghana were distorted by the presence of Trinidadians fighting alongside with the British in the Ashanti Wars. Later on in 1936, however, the Trinidadian people recognized the error and chose to fight against the Italian dictator Mussolini's occupation of East Africa.

After Mr. Kamboon's introduction, the Indian Prime Minister B. Panday and the President of Ghana give their addresses. The PM speech is quite formal and centers on his efforts to improve the situation of the local African population. He emphasizes that he does not want Africans to feel threatened by an Indian political cadre and lists his commitment to build an African library, his donation of 25 acres for the permanent African model-village, and his consideration of legalizing African Orisha wedding practices. Ill-tempered

applauses and boos interrupt his speech when mentioning Manning and the presence of "some forces pulling to divide the country". He concludes acknowledging the multi-cultural profile of Trinidad and emphasizing his respect for each heritage.

The address of the guest president starts on a humorous note with him asking to borrow the first page of the PM's speech in order to follow the protocol properly. The PM is caught by surprise and it takes him few seconds to realize he really meant to borrow the page. Rowlings' speech becomes increasingly interesting when he leaves the script and quite theatrically invites the audience to realize "the miracle they are in." Being the technical person that he is, he lauds modernity and technology and emphasizes the importance of skills, especially in a developing country. When he too names Manning, people from the stands again clap and scream. At that point he responds to the audience by saying that: "one day, if and when he (Manning) will get to wear the crown, only then will it be fair for them to cheer him if he still deserves it". He then alludes to the difficulties of running a country and to how much easier it is to criticize from the outside. The majority of the audience is taken aback by the guest's reaction, some people cheers, and the PM appears visibly satisfied at the refined way his guest has taken his side. The president concludes his address by explaining that he will be working on a cultural and economic agreement with the Trinidadian Government and at the end, he and his wife are offered flowers, a plaque, and a traditional national musical

instrument, a steeldrum. The PM promises that if Rowlings learns to play it, he will too, so that next time they can play duets!

The program continues with an eclectic cultural extravaganza. The dance segment comprises performances by an African *bele* company from Tobago, an Indian group dancing to a Hindi movie's song, a Venezuelan folk-dance ensemble, and an African *limbo*-dance group. The musical segment includes some choir music from a San Fernando group, a few calypsos (one talking about Africa), Brother Resistance singing a song praising the Baptist religion, a Venezuelan *parang* medley, and more steeldrums.

Throughout the following week, the booing incident becomes a springboard for an emotional controversy about the current political condition in which the country of Trinidad finds itself. Newspaper and radio commentaries elaborate on issues of national identity, on the consequences of a prevailing ethnic political mentality, and on the need to learn a civic behavior fostering a cohesive nation. While the PNM blamed "PM Panday's own partisan remarks" for evoking the audience's reaction, others voiced their dismay for the intolerance of a crowd apparently unaware that it was attending a State ceremony and that as citizens they owe respect to their own elected authorities (*Trinidadian Guardian*, 1997b). For example, an Independent Senator expressed her dismay suggesting that: "Some very discourteous, uneducated, and ill-mannered people (I cannot think of a word to describe them... they could not be citizens of Trinidad and Tobago) disgraced the

Government, the country, the Emancipation Committee, our guest, and most of all, the citizens of the country." The Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly also stated that: "In Tobago we condemn the act in the strongest possible language, and completely disassociate ourselves (Tobagonians) from it" (*Trinidad Guardian*, 1997c).

Another state-monitored event in Trinidad is the annual Independence Day, celebrated on the 31st of August. This is also a composite social extravaganza where political symbolisms are enacted to suggest the relevance of nationhood. The morning part of the day-long celebration is the official segment and includes a motorcade and a military parade moving from the Queens' Park Savannah to the military barracks in St. James. This segment starts very early, partly because of the suffocating summer heat, and is not very much attended by the general population. All military and civilian corps, including firemen, medical services, as well as canine and mounted teams parade under the attentive eyes of the local political and diplomatic elites. Flags, flowers, ribbons, banners, and various decorations display the national colors or the country motto, while the only Cessna airplane left to the national Trinidadian Air Force roars a few times over the festivities. A few hours later, on their way to the military barracks, marching bands including brass and steeldrum sections (but no Indian musical instruments) play military tunes as well as current soca, calypso, and soca-*chutney* songs.

Notwithstanding the alleged formality of the occasion, military and band musicians break ranks to hug family and say hello to friends (Figure 7). The street barriers and picket lines are ignored, and it is not unusual for the crowd to jump in with their preferred marching band and dance behind it. Nobody seems to take the occasion too seriously and locals frequently associate Independence Day more with the following afternoon party than with the early civic display.

In stark contrast to the sparsely attended morning ceremonies, a huge crowd covers the streets of the capital city during the late afternoon portion of the celebrations. Eating, socializing, attending to neighborhood concerts, dancing, and watching the fire-works are what seem to bring together Trinidadians of all walks. *Liming* is the true national practice! When asked for the reasons behind such evident lack of interest in the morning program, people shrug their shoulders and blame the early hour or the heat. A number of my informants, however, admit a complete disinterest in military affairs or the nationalistic presentations pervading the occasion.

As described above, Indian Arrival Day and Emancipation Day are commemorations of important moments in the history of the Indian and African community respectively. To this day, these events receive attention mainly by the members originating them. The state's interests, however, are increasingly channeled into these two events and efforts are made to communicate a message of national identity that is inclusive of all people.

Still, the differentiated participation of the population hints that the state's attempts to instill social involvement and to overwrite historical affiliations have not yet been fully successful.

Despite the fact that many Carnival revelers view Carnival as the unifying national event, a number of my Indian and African informants held a different opinion. They explained that sacred celebrations such as Christmas, *Hosay*, or *Divali* (the first Christian, the second *Shi'ite* Muslim, the last Hindu) are better able to inspire those communal sentiments fostered by the government. These are celebrations perceived as having a unique capacity of attracting people of all backgrounds. *Divali* in particular, with its poetic display of lights symbolizing the victory of good over evil, yearly unveils a feeling of unity between most members of the society, independent of their religious affiliations.

Christmas in Trinidad also reflects an interesting mixture of multi-cultural practices welcomed by all. *Parang*, for example, is a Spanish-based Christmas music originally from Venezuela. A few Trinidadian villages, such as Lopinot and Paramin, contain high concentrations of Spanish descendants who are famous for their *parang* performances. Throughout December *paranderos* (*parang* musicians) and their *cuatros* (tiny four-stringed guitars) entertain in bars and clubs all over the island. House parties are incomplete without a *parang* band and throughout the holiday season all local radio stations air *parang* music.

Traditional Christmas carols have their place in Christian churches and in outdoor musical extravaganzas such as 'Carols by Candlelight' held in Port-of-Spain's Botanical Gardens. This is the European legacy, along with gaily-bedecked Christmas trees and miniature nativity scenes strung with multitudes of colored lights. Even most of my non-orthodox Muslim informants, traditionally the community less open toward other religious practices, admitted to appreciate the brotherly spirit of Christmas.

Finally, another popular celebration is *Hosay*, a *Shi'ite* religious commemoration performed in two locations within the island. Much to the dismay of the local Islamic community, the forces of commodification are transforming this solemn ceremony into a marketable street parade for the entertainment of the spectators. *Hosay* involves not only audiences of mixed backgrounds, but culturally diverse participants as well. Such widespread popularity is paving a path leading to the understanding of alternative historical experiences and to the reconciling of differences. Chapters later in this work are dedicated to an in depth analysis of festivals, including *Divali* and *Hosay*.

CHAPTER VII

MUSIC AND OTHER CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, Westernizing forces affect all societies, and global lifestyles and ideologies are impacting even the most traditional populations. Ethnic and national identities, therefore, not only exhibit markers of one's country of provenience such as language, religious practices, marriage patterns, and occupational trends, but also the encroaching of foreign elements on traditional ones. Similarly, informal daily practices including participation in public festivals, music preferences, patronizing entertainment venues, dress style, and dance movements function both as ethnic markers as well as indicators of new socio-cultural trends.

In the case of Trinidad's Indian community, for example, ethnically important traits such as language have been increasingly lost. At the time of their arrival, Indian recruits spoke dialects related to standard Hindi. For decades to follow, Bhojpuri, or 'plantation Hindustani' as it came to be called, became in Trinidad the *lingua franca* Indians could share despite regional and caste differences. Today, however, most Indian languages have disappeared and only the Hindu and Muslim religious elite respectively are retaining Sanskrit, Hindi, or Urdu. In the last three decades, however, religious schools

and cultural centers have been making efforts to revitalize their use among the younger generations.

Similarly, Parekh observed that already within early indentured Indians, caste lost much of its traditional relevance (in Bhat, 1996). Vertovec indicated that a contributing factor leading to the attenuation of the caste system in Trinidad was the significant diversity among laborers in agricultural practices, linguistic families, kinship structures, basic religious orientations, and systems of economic exchange. Colonial bureaucrats compiled data pertaining to immigrants' caste background, but these categories were often artificial and biased against indigenous classificatory schemes. Records suggest, however, that the migrant population was indeed drawn from a significantly broad base (Vertovec, 1992:95)

Hindus coming to Trinidad were not able to perpetuate the rigidity of a caste system, which crumbled under the harsh life-conditions encountered. Months spent crossing the ocean, as well as years spent in plantation barracks, weakened Indians' sense of hierarchy, and rules of distance and purity fell into disuse. A caste mentality, however, still persists among some religious circles. Brahmanism continues to be used as a preferential status for access to high religious ranking and orthodox ideologies are embraced to silence a community-based, folk Hinduism as well as to delay the development of a less traditional lifestyle.

Other cultural practices, such as parting women's hair with *henna* or marking the foreheads with *tikas*, are also only occasionally retained and mainly for ceremonial purposes. The local professional Indian population has clearly adopted the Western suit style and children of the affluent Christian elite are sent to the U.S. and the U.K. to pursue their education, rather than to India.

Other markers, however, continue to signify ethnic differences. For instance, today's young Indians often manifest a musical taste that sets them apart from African youths. While the latter are avid consumers of Jamaican reggae or black American hip-hop, soul, and r&b music, Indians show a preference for white American forms such as hard rock or country-western music. The following statistics by Ryan on music preferences among the Trinidadian population hint to a trend in the calypso/soca, rock, reggae/dub, and *chutney* categories (Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1997) (Table 1):

Table 1: Music preferences by ethnicity:

	Africans	<i>Douglas</i>	Indians	Mix (Eu.+Af.)
Calypso/Soca	74	62	50	49
Rock	16	19	25	20
Reggae/Dub	50	46	33	49
Ind. classical	11	16	16	16
Eu. classical	22	29	18	29
<i>Chutney</i>	12	22	60	16
Caribbean folk	14	31	26	35
Pop	58	54	51	65
Jazz	23	22	14	25
Total	280	301	293	304

Public celebrations are also occasions when audiences and participants are segregated along ethnic lines. Although since the 1980's the Indian cultural presence on the national stage has become more prevalent, many individuals perceive, for example, that there are two carnivals: one Indian, called *Phagwa*, and the so called 'official' one, the 'true Trini' Carnival. The former is performed and attended mainly by Indians in densely populated Indian areas (see chapter nine); the 'official' and world-renowned one, is

largely viewed as the primary generator of a heartfelt, national unity (see chapter eight). Mainly Afro-Creole, Creolized urban residents, and foreign tourists celebrate this Carnival along the streets of the capital city. Here, the 'Rainbow People' of Trinidad experience it as an opportunity to ignore differences and to remind the mesmerized world (and themselves) that "all are we, is one."

Within the mainstream Indian discourse, this Carnival represents just another example of African cultural hegemony made to coincide with nationalistic ideologies and interests. For a large portion of the Indian community, this is an instance where an alleged patriotism is hypocritically forced upon those who are trying to reject a vision that does not acknowledge their own one. This issue is further elaborated in the following Carnival chapter.

Clearly, cultural taste re-affirms a group's experience and ideology and operates in a dialectic relation with the political function that actors attribute to these preferences. Artistic practices in Trinidad have evolved into distinct, expressive media within their own historical milieu and often conform to elaborate structures of artists and supporters, judging criteria, as well as panels of experts and producers. Within the organizational framework defining these activities, individuals often develop long-lasting networks. These ongoing relationships frequently overlap relevant societal themes

characterizing the larger society, while a shared history points to a continuity that goes beyond a simple regression to the past.

Throughout centuries, music, dancing, theatre, and masquerading have developed unique evolutionary paths. This chapter explores a variety of musical expressions that have underpinned the ongoing ethnic and nationalistic discourse permeating the wider Trinidadian society. In particular, it emphasizes how the commodification of ethnicity has turned music into a major component of the cultural capital of specific groups.

STEELDRUM

Steeldrum (also known as pan) music first acquired a powerful metaphoric significance in the 1930's as a form of resistance against British legislation prohibiting the use of African drums. This ordinance was initially issued in 1883 on the grounds that beating African drums was a disturbance to other citizens as well as an instigator of rowdiness (Goddard, 1991).

Originated in the slums of Port-of-Spain, steeldrums were made of abandoned oil-drum shells and tuned by pan-makers with hammers of different sizes (Figure 8). Pan symbolized social disadvantage and poverty and was the proud voice of the indomitable spirit of the African masses. During violent street encounters with the British authorities and between rival neighborhood gangs, it screamed protest and anger. In the 1960's, however,

the steelband movement gradually shook off its image and in 1971, when the Amoco Oil Company sponsored one of the most aggressive steelbands, the move into respectability was complete.

Even today, no matter how well pan is played, its music continues to be loud and electrifying, almost a form of violence to unsympathetic ears. This aggression, however, has been channeled into constructive forms of artistic competition and most panyards (the space where steelbands rehearse) are the foci of social interactions no more dangerous than places like dance clubs, bars, or neighborhood basketball courts. During my many months of working and *liming* with the members of one of the oldest steelbands in the middle-class neighborhood of Woodbrook, I observed a trend toward both avoidance of illegitimate activities as well as an increased ethnic integration among musicians, and 'pan pushers' (fans).

Such social patterns contradictory to pans' original symbolism are giving this African artistic manifesto new meaning. Notwithstanding its violent history, pan has become a form of social control and has moved into the schools as well as religious services. Once the emblem of African emancipation, pan has become part of the hegemonic relation with the West where it has gained worldwide recognition through musical arrangements ranging from the classical repertoire to American pop. Ironically, pan has also become one of the most expensive common musical instruments, further abandoning the image it represented at its birth.

In Trinidad, panyards are active most of the year, but it is after Christmas that they become feverish hives of activity. During the months before Carnival, players strive to perfect complex orchestral pieces, which they will perform during Panorama, the main nationwide steelband competition first held during the 1963 Carnival celebrations. Over decades, bands of hundreds of musicians and supporters have become permanent cliques of friends who often interact beyond Carnival time.

Pan also takes to the streets in August, when bands perform all over the capital city during Steelband Week. In fall, the Schools Steelband Music Festival and the World Steelband Festival alternate their showing off of the best local young pannists and worldwide pan orchestras. As the number of performance showcases increases over time, so does the support of the followers, both local and foreign.

However, while it is true that panyards have become the meeting point for musicians and fans of all backgrounds, Stuempfle's work on Trinidadian steelbands recorded the cold welcome that Indians faced during their first attempts to enter this historically African domain (1990, 1995). His research confirmed that although the Indian contribution to pan music has been significant throughout the history of the instrument, Africans have frequently underplayed it or flatly negated it. To this day, controversies still emerge each time educators and government officials (usually African) suggest pan music should become a standard subject in the national school curriculum. The most

traditional segment of the Indian community in particular reacts negatively to these proposals, rejecting them for not giving equal recognition to Indian music styles or instruments as well.

CALYPSO

*What's wrong with these Indian people
As if their intentions is for trouble
Long ago you'd see ah Indian in the road
With his capra waiting to tote people load
But I noticed there is no more Indian again
Since the women and them take away Creole name.*

*As for the men and them I must relate
Long time all they work was in a cane estate
But now they own every theatre
Yes hotel, rumshop and hired car
Long time was Ramkaisingh, Boodoo, Poodoo
Now is David, Cooper, Johnston, Caesar.*

(Mighty Killer, 1951)

The above stanzas by a renowned African calypso (or kaiso) singer provide us with a glimpse at the ethnic tensions that have permeated Trinidadian society. Although currently presented as national artistic treasures, both pan and calypso music developed among working-class, urban African men (Elder, 1973; Liverpool, 1986; Warner, 1982). From its dawn, calypso served as a symbol of community pride and African resistance, and to this day many perceive it as still characterizing the ethnic and cultural consciousness of that group.

Similarly to steeldrum-arranger Jit Samaroo of Indian descent, white calypso singer Denise Plummer and Syrian Mighty Trini have generated for years a high degree of hostility among African musicians and audiences. Although now all well received, the broader African community has in the past seen these artists as intruders in a niche that is an African reserve.

Since its inception, calypso functioned as a powerful voice for inter-ethnic antagonism and distrust. The caricature, *mepris* (scorn), and *picong* (spice) contained in African calypso lyrics, have affected all ethnic groups and have nourished the social discourse involving the entire Trinidadian community. Raging in a political battleground sharply drawn along ethnic lines, African artists such as Mighty Cobra, Lord Superior, Black Stalin, Valentino, and Mighty Christo, as well as the younger Cro Cro and Sugar Aloe, have openly voiced the confrontational views many Africans have held against their fellow citizens, in particular, Indians. Even before riding on the 1970's Black Power ideology exhorting blacks to reject exploitation, many calypsonians harshly insulted the Indian community as a den of competitors, outsiders, and opportunists. Rohlehr calls it "sublimated violence; the counterpart of corresponding aggression and contempt for 'the other'" (1990:256).

*To check upon the Indians seriously
 Long ago it was the Indians toting load
 Otherwise with a broom they sweeping the road
 But if you tell them so, they'll tell you you're wrong
 The Indians and them they own half of the town.*

(Mighty Cobra, 1954)

While the two classic calypsos presented above offer a view of very tense Afro/Indian relations, calypso performers have also made alternative political stances. In the 1950's Mighty Sparrow, a pillar in the calypso world, marked the beginning of a type of populist social education centered on building an inclusive multi-ethnic society. His lyrics, as well as songs by Unity, Sniper, Blakie, Lord Kitchener, Composer, Maestro, Ras Shorti I, and David Rudder became the harbingers of the 'brotherhood word'.

'Nation-building' songs like the following ones praise the friendly country of Trinidad and spread cliches of unity and tolerance among all creeds and races. However, it is interesting to note that even Lord Baker's calypso, despite its noble intentions, clearly re-delineated those hegemonic parameters that have historically associated African expressions (calypso and steeldrum) with the nation of Trinidad itself.

*It's fantastic, yes it is, the way how we live as one
 In integration, our nation is second to none
 Here the Negro, the white man, the Chinese, the Indian
 Walk together hand in hand.
 In this wonderland of calypso an this wonderland of steelband
 Where I was born, God bless our nation.*

(Lord Baker, 1967)

*Williams and Capildeo will go down in history
 Let's forget who is DLP
 Let's live in harmony, in racial solidarity
 This is your place
 Let's forget this nonsense about race.*

(Nat Hepburn, 1962)

*Tolerance is our policy
 We love it this way
 Both the black and white
 So we must live in unity*

(Lord Kitchener, 1965)

*See how we (Trinidadians) movin'
 Watch how we groovin'
 One lovely nation
 Heading into salvation
 Under a groove
 The Ganges is gonna meet the Nile.*

(David Rudder, 1999)

A catalyst agent for such political truce has been the government's involvement in the arts. Financial support and various forms of funding may have served as incentives for feisty calypsonians descending from the fearsome African *griots*¹ to turn into idealistic ambassadors for peace. Furthermore, a message of nationhood is not only featured by African calypsonians but also by an increasing number of *Douglas* and Indian

¹ West African French term indicating a caste of professional musicians. Because of their knowledge of local traditions as well as of religious practices *griots* are also considered community historians.

musicians including Drupatee, Indian Prince, Kenny J, Mighty *Dougla*, and Ricky Jai.

*If they serious about sending people back for true
They got to split me into two
When he say I have no race, he ain't talking true
Instead of having one race, you know I got two.*

(Mighty *Dougla*, 1961)

The song *Jahaji Bhai* (Hindustani for: brotherhood of the boat) sung in 1996 by *Dougla* Brother Marvin is the epitome of musical and ethnic crossover. This song equated the crossing of the ocean by African slaves to the boat journey of indentured Indians and justified the coming together of the two communities. Inclusive of words in Hindi, Swahili, English, and *Patois*, the song offered its audience a tolerant vision of *Douglarization* where mixed people could celebrate both their Indian and African roots.

*The indentureship and the slavery
Bind together two races in unity
For those who play ignorant
Talking 'bout the African descendent
If yah want to know the true
Take a trip back to yuh roots
And somewhere on that journey
You go see a man in dhoti
Saying he prayers in front of a jhandi
Let us live under one sky
As Jahaji Bhai.*

Even calypsos that acclaim brotherhood between ethnic groups have occasionally displeased Indians' sensitivity. Although in the song 'Liberation' African calypsonian Valentino called for "unity between the two black races of Trinidad, Africans and Indians," Indians did not appreciate the appeal. While the lyrics legitimized the preservation of ancestral traditions, a right for which Indians had fought since their arrival, they offended Indians by addressing them as black. Similarly, lyrics eulogizing enough closeness between the two groups to imply miscegenation have not been always welcomed among Hindus. Some view *Douglarization* not as a process bringing the two groups closer but as a mechanism weakening the Indian community. A long-lasting controversy rooted in this issue surrounds the musical career of Indian female singer Drupatee Ramgoonai.

Drupatee's capturing of the growing interpenetration of African and Indian music and society can be seen as the mirror of a new trend in Trinidad history. Her artistic message represents a double level of contestation: the Indian artist entering an African domain, and the Indian woman leaving the boundaries of the Indian world. Her publicly singing, dancing, and gyrating in wild abandon demystifies the so called 'acceptable' image of Indian femininity and by extension, of the entire local community. She becomes the symbol of the insurgence of Indian female voices traditionally kept silent.

As illustrated by the ongoing debate fomented by the indignant stand of the *Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha*, the local conservative Hindu religious

organization, Drupatee's scandal develops around the orthodox Hindu high-cultural notion of contamination (Reddock, 1994). Instead of perpetuating the image of an Indian woman victim of the oversexed, glamorously dressed African stud, Drupatee's lyrics foster ethnic mixing (for an analysis on African masculinity see Lieber, 1981). In fact, the stereotypical inter-ethnic predatory abuse is transposed through allusions that disrespect for women actually flourishes within the Indian community, not outside it. Hers is an effort, increasingly shared among Indian women, to expose and reject the domestic role often characterizing relationships between Indian partners.

While it is known that violence against women is widespread especially in rural India, an idealistic perception by the Indian community in Trinidad toward the mother country has prevented the acknowledgment of this historically persistent problem. Indian religious leaders, *pundits* and *imams*, as well as secular ones like the elders of the *Panchayat* (a community tribunal used to resolve minor grievances) have blamed the shock of indentureship and the alienation from the wider Trinidadian society for the presence of a sub-culture of pain and self-destruction. Kept hidden within the community, Indian male-female relations have been suffering a structural chaos and emotional fracturedness often displayed through domestic abuse, child violence, and alcoholism. Cutlasses (a type of machete), rum, and Gramoxone (a poisonous herbicide often used self-destructively) have frequently turned the Indian household into a stage for desperate actions. Although the mass

media are increasingly disclosing these tragic patterns of communal life, for too long the Indian community has been paying for its tendency toward secrecy.

Drupatee's commentary makes her the epitome of a type of liberating discourse that defies Indian traditionalists' fears of hybridism and feminism. Women occupying public spaces and freeing themselves through music and dancing (see the *chutney* phenomenon described below) portray a form of rebellion against oppression. More than just fighting an artistic battle against the African male-dominated calypso microcosm, Drupatee instigates a reaction by conservative Indians who chastise her for betraying the Indian values of ethnic purity and female propriety. Her message of *Douglarization* included in her lyrics challenges the image of a monolithic Indian community and provides a public stage for the re-examination of morality as well as gender and ethnic relations.

*The music of steeldrum of Laventille
Cannot help but mix with rhythms from Caroni
For it is a symbol of how much we come of age
It's a brand new stage.*

(Drupatee, 1988)

The acceptance of a *Dougla* identity not only disrupts the dominant imagery between Africans and Indians, but it modifies traditional gender patterns between members of each community. At the individual level, ethnically mixed marriages are becoming more common and younger couples

increasingly adopt heterodox criteria of choice. Romantic love, personal feelings, and acquired class status are gaining relevance over family preference and group membership. In the case of mixed couples, traditional matrifocal African households and patri-virilocal Indian ones are replaced with a trend toward neolocal residences.

Conflicting situations, however, are still widespread, and when unable to resolve tensions between personal and familial pressures, individuals may end up resorting to desperate actions. The double suicide of a young mixed couple during my stay in Trinidad pointed to the stigma attached to exogamy and to the difficulty of coping with the rejection of one's own group.

A local Indian psychologist and friend summarized for me Dr. V. Samlalsingh's presentation at the 1997 Annual General Meeting of the Southern Branch of the Mental Association on the topic "Ethnicity as a Variant Symptom of Behavior". Dr. Samlalsingh indicated that: "A large number of suicidal patients are of Indian origin," and that "the Hindu system they belong to may have a role in their pathological behavior." She continued saying that: "Some of the most confused patients are those whose parents are from different ethnic origins and that they may suffer an identity crisis. They don't know which culture to adopt and in some cases they can even be antagonistic to both cultures."

The Indian contribution to calypsos has also fired the flames of controversy for its introduction of stylistic patterns such as folk *chutney* singing and instrumentation. Since the 1950's and 1960's, artists of various ethnic background such as Mighty Trini, Ras Shorti I, Lackan Khariya, and Yussuf Khan have merged calypso, *chutney*, and soca rhythms evoking a wide range of reactions mainly from the African purists' camp. These syncretic attempts have been received with disdain for their weakening the original calypso style, or with enthusiasm for repositioning calypso in a more global artistic milieu. These are Drupatee's lyrics about her rejection by her African colleagues:

*Plenty kaisonian have the same plan
Ah hear them whisper
When they together
They say kaiso ent have no nice Indian woman.*

(Drupatee, 1988)

African critics have also questioned inclusion into calypso of stylistic influences coming from other cultural traditions. American forms such as jazz, rap, and gospel, as well as Jamaican reggae, dub, and dancehall are frequently integrated with calypso rhythms and patterns. However, these artistic practices are considered 'legitimate' because they are perceived as belonging to the same African tradition.

Furthermore, the African camp has attacked the growing number of calypsos lacking a political role in raising social issues. Purists are accusing calypso of replacing its witty critique and mockery with calls to 'jump up' (dance) and have a good time. These songs are produced to elicit from the audience a form of kinetic rather than intellectual participation. Because political calypsos tend to have a slower rhythm, they are unsuitable for dancing at carnival *fetes*, so they do not receive much airplay on the local radio stations, and therefore become less marketable. Only the occasional national controversy can suddenly turn them into a hot commercial item.

The questioning by both Indians and Africans of the prerogative of calypso as a national artistic form has deepened the debate over themes of authority interpenetrating the dynamics of local cultural practices. For example, observers cannot but notice that most Trinidadian art expressions are presented in the form of competitions. From teenager beauty pageant to the Calypso Monarch Contest, from children's steelband festivals to *chutney* shows the format is identical: a friendly competition. This suggests that control is exercised by having artistic practices organized through hierarchical organizations.

A 'body politic' is particularly evident at a higher level of social organization where 'mas' (short for masquerade) camps, panyards, calypso tents (stages), and so on have achieved the character of national agencies. Within these structures, different groups compete to take control over artistic

traditions by using ethnicity or cultural posture to consolidate their authority. For example, when an African contestant won the queen category in the 1997 Indian Cultural Pageant 'Mastana Bahar' there was a uproar from the purist section of the Indian community who did not welcome the participation, and even less the victory of an 'outsider'. Others, including the Pageant producer, K. S. Mohammed, saw it as an opportunity "to share the local Indian culture and to fight thinking as polarized people" (*Trinidad Express*, 1997).

Finally, breakaway segments occasionally attempt to sanction their own competitions, judges, and evaluating criteria, rather than recognizing the rankings of the official organization. In their act of resistance, splinter groups become victims of cultural subordination and are often pushed to a lower level of authenticity. Their struggle, however, perpetuates the presence of contestation arenas where questioning others' claims to authority contributes to maintaining a fluid artistic and social milieu.

CHUTNEY

Since the late 1980's, the Indian community has responded to the African near monopoly of the national entertainment sector by supporting the emergence of the *chutney* phenomenon. *Chutney* refers to the original popular Indian music also called 'break-away' and is performed at rural folk

weddings on Saturday night. This is sung in Hindi and is accompanied by drums, organs, and *dhantals*.

The Trinidad version of *chutney* taps the resources of Bhajan songs also written in Hindi dialects, including Bhojpuri, the *lingua franca* of indentured immigrants. A 150-year-old oral tradition shared by Indian laborers in Trinidad contributed to retain an impressive repertoire of *chutney* songs. Moreover, locally *chutney* has been turned from a traditional semi-religious expression to a popular form of commercial entertainment. At present, *chutney* concerts hosted in huge open spaces throughout the countryside can attract thousands of Indians spectators, thereby becoming very successful financial endeavors.

Some segments of the Indian population view the *chutney* phenomenon as an opportunity to publicize Indian art and an alternative Indian identity. They also underline the genuine message of ethnic harmony presented by *chutney* as well as its facilitating the integration of Indians in Carnival and the wider artistic milieu.

Indian women are seen using *chutney* as a rebellion against their past seclusion and as a signifier of their will to inscribe a modernized Indian womanhood. The old image of the passive, docile Indian woman is being replaced with new female bodies fighting back their menfolk's repressive violence while celebrating the end of a century-old, chauvinist morality.

Art, once more, is used to fight censorship, the traditional weapon of a politically conservative, discriminating and often misogynist discourse.

Similarly to calypso music, *chutney* is also the focus of internal controversy. This debate stems from the fact that Indians have historically considered *chutney* music and dance acceptable practices as parts of a pre-wedding fertility event, the *Matikor*. Although involving a sexually suggestive dance performance, *chutney* was kept in a collective space accessible only to women and under the strict supervision of male religious leaders. Today, the confinement of *chutney* to the *Matikor* has been challenged, and a large number of Indian women of all ages attend public concerts where they openly perform the same sensuous dances once practiced behind close doors.

The result is that, while *chutney* is becoming a favorite artistic alternative among Indian folks, conservative males and some Hindu religious bodies perceive it quite differently. This orthodox segment believes that *chutney* dancing and singing in public has turned the religious and cultural legacy of an ancient civilization into an obscene and sacrilegious behavior. Furthermore, it is felt that *chutney* is distorting the traditional image of Indian womanhood, while the vulgarity and drunkenness often associated with these shows promote a negative image of the broader Indian community.

The persistence of both the calypso and the *chutney* debates suggest that contestation over identity and national representation does not only entice one collectivity against the other, but that it often develops within sub-groups

internal to each community. Class lines and gender, as well as levels of religious orthodoxy and urbanization tend to articulate different experiences, which in turn motivate a variety of views within erroneously perceived monolithic communities.

Notwithstanding the value of *chutney* as a weapon in a new feminist consciousness, its increasing commercial success needs to be channeled properly in order to provide long-term empowerment of Indian women. Promoters once involved mainly with African music genres are appreciating its economic potential and are creating national spaces for its marketing (Karran, 1996). As outlined above, calypso's evolution from a mindful social commentary into soca, a mindless source of dance music for Carnival and *fetes* may provide an indicator of what may become of *chutney* as its exploitation continues to grow.

Commercialization may turn *chutney* away from a political activism that nurtures social ideologies necessary to fortify new Indian identities. *Chutney's* appropriation by the music market may dilute the relevance of its agenda and turn it into mindless entertainment based on immediate financial gain and the manipulation of artists. This trend could delay Indian women's achievement of their rights as well as the development of a type of inter-ethnic male-female interactions (mainly with Africans) not based on stereotypical imageries.

PICHAKAREE

Calypso has been the 'war-trumpet' of the African socio-political struggle and this group's resentment toward other ethnicities. In the Indian community over the last decade, the religious body *Hindu Prachar Kendra* has added to its annual *Phagwa* celebrations a song competition termed *pichakaree*. This style is an offshoot of traditional Indian folk music, it is sung partly in English and partly in Hindi and, as in calypso for Africans, its lyrics express the current social concerns of the Indian community. In 1994 Rukminee Beepath was singing in 'Trinbago is Our Motherland':

*Mai Hoon Trinidad (I am Trinidad)
Descended from East Indian
Spanish, Chinese, African
All belong to this nation*

*Tie Rakhi Bandhan² (let's celebrate Rakhi Bandhan)
For Brothers of this nation
Give them inspiration
To drive out discrimination*

*This is the land of Carnival
Steelband and Calypso
Chutney, Tassa drumming
Pichakaree and limbo*

*Calypsonians stop singing
Your racial calypso
You want to bring disharmony
To my sweet Trinbago*

² Hindu ritual where siblings promise each other respect and ever lasting support.

The following is the summary of an interview of a popular *pichakaree* female singer in her late-20's describing the type of discrimination against Indians pervading the Trinidadian artistic scene. The incident she describes happened in the mid-1990's at the Queen's Park Savannah. Although frequently used for state occasions usually exhibiting artistic forms representative of the multi-cultural makeup of the country, the Savannah has been traditionally considered an African space. Here is where the *Lidj Yasu Omowale* model-village commemorates 'African-ness' and provides small-businesses with the opportunity of a specialized market. Here, on Emancipation Night, the *flambeau* procession brings together African drummers, dancers, and marchers celebrating their message of freedom throughout the African sections of the capital city. It is in this space that the official Carnival festivities culminate, where Kings and Queens 'mas' are crowned, and where the North Stand audience renews its pledge to 'Trinidadian-ness', that is, the African component of it.

On this highly symbolic stage Indira found herself forced to face deeply rooted African loyalties unwilling to pull back at her attempts to enter an historically off-limit domain. Armed with the cultural baggage of an articulated, outspoken, socially involved Hindu, *pichakaree* singer Indira was on the Independence Night official program of the Carifesta celebrations. This government-sponsored event showcased Trinidad's artistic blend and was supposed to be an occasion of unity between islands of the Caribbean.

Indira's song introduced, similarly to the traditional commentary style of calypso, a number of issues concerning the local society. Through a creative format in which she presented herself as writing a letter to the Director of the Ministry of Culture (an African calypsonian himself), she pointed out that his promises of equal recognition to all ethnic artistic expressions have not been maintained (Figure 9). In her imaginary letter she listed the lack of support to, and appreciation for, Indian expressions and made a scathing attack on calypso:

*How come calypso is national culture, degrading the Indian?
 You know who is the champion.
 Degrading we women, and soca is the champion.
 One hundred years and fifty of this anniversary.
 Not one calypso to celebrate we history
 So, how come calypso is the national culture?*

What made her performance even more provocative was Indira publicly dedicating her song to a local Hindu *pundit*, who was then involved in a controversy for having refused to accept the Trinity Cross (a highly coveted national recognition) because of its Christian symbolism. During her passionate recounting to me she described how the predominantly African crowd reacted with an initial growl, which soon turned into jeers and boos before the end of her tune. She was barely able to finish her performance and with a broken voice thanked the audience and left. The same night, an African public announcer and cultural activist took the microphone to chide the audience for such behavior. Interestingly enough, the evening before, the

same song was presented at the Queen's Hall, the only formal indoor auditorium in the capital, where the more educated and mixed audience welcomed her political message openly.

While narrating this experience Indira manifested her sadness that, although celebrating independence, her country proved it had not achieved enough maturity to respect differences. As an artist she admitted she could equally appreciate the political commentary and wittiness of both calypso and *pichakaree* music. However, as an Indian she lamented that only the former is attributed national status, and even when it is instigating ethnic discord, it is allowed to thrive.

CHAPTER VIII

CARNIVAL

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world and tied to pagan traditions well before Christianity, Carnivalistic rituals marked the end of winter and the arrival of spring. With the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church during the past millennium, Carnival became strongly associated with Catholic practices. This affiliation allowed for its persistence in areas with a strong Catholic presence including Europe, New Orleans in the U.S., and various countries of Central and South America. Traditionally considered a pre-Lenten festivity, carnival (from Latin *carne vale*, farewell to the flesh) has been viewed as an alternative context to the everyday, and is characterized by revelry, merrymaking, and overindulgence in eating, drinking, and sex. During carnival celebrations people escape their ordinary daily routines by participating in massive parades, masquerading, acting extravagantly, playing with others, and dancing ecstatically to loud music.

Interpreted as occasions for opposites and inversions, most carnivals take place in the public domain and include the temporary possession of city streets. This spatial pattern is occasionally modified in specific social contexts, some of which are presented in the section below dedicated to the

Trinidadian Carnival.

By functioning as a safety-valve mechanism, carnivals ease the release of bitterness and hostility. For the politically marginalized and economically destitute, carnivals represent rare opportunities for voicing discontent. Here, manipulative processes can actively challenge the status-quo, and survival strategies of give and take are played out. For a few days, lives full of contradictions can experience a reality foreign to everyday existence. Arising from chronic adversities and from incongruities between 'what should be' and 'what is', pent-up frustrations are faced and relieved (Malinowski, 1925). Carnivals let the world stand upside-down through temporary role-reversals, and manifest the aspirations of the revelers, subconsciously and not, as they relate to status, wealth, and position in their ordinary society.

The Carnival of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, for example, is a *fiesta popular* with a universal orientation that emphasizes all-embracing categories: life as opposed to death, joy as opposed to sadness, rich as opposed to poor, and so on. Mediating elements such as dance, music, play, fancy costumes, and merriment contribute to a shift of hierarchies where pre-existing structures are temporarily negotiated. In this newly created domain, social classes enter abnormal relations with each other and the costumed masses, usually the blacks and Mulattos from the *favelas* (shanty towns), parade as part of a resplendent royalty the incarnation of their new symbolic power (Da Matta, 1991; Manning, 1983).

Yet, as Turner pointed out, despite these seeming expressions of rebellion and acts of inversion, a formality is maintained. Carnivals confirm the presence of well-defined social structures and function as contexts where contradictions can be possibly minimized (Turner, 1969, 1974). Carnivals' integrative component, therefore, brings together people from diverse backgrounds but also facilitates the acceptance of the standing moral and hierarchical order. Cohen observed that in both the Brazilian Carnival and the New Orleans *Mardi Gras*, the ordinary supremacy of the white middle and upper classes is further validated (1993).

Carnivals, in spite of their guise of gay abandon, are also the object of manipulation by groups and individuals whose voices find their way through this sanctioned form of protest (Cohen, 1993; DaMatta, 1991; Mitchell, 1995). According to Slyomovics parades are public and publicly dramatize social relations (1995). Participants, *and the audience as well*, (italics mine) define the social actors as well as the conflicts to be brought out for re-evaluation. Cohen stated that confrontations are part of the core structure of carnivals, which are characterized by both relationships of alliance and enmity (1993). Tensions between participants, therefore, are not to be seen as accidental intrusions to an otherwise peaceful and politically neutral cultural form, but rather as elements of the very essence of this celebration.

HISTORY

The Dawn of Carnival: an Elite's Frivolity

French-speaking immigrants brought Carnival to Trinidad towards the end of the 18th century. Lured by the generous land grants offered by Spain to develop agriculture and trade, they entered the island coming from France, Martinique, Grenada, Guadeloupe, and Haiti. By the end of the century they numbered 18,000. They developed nearly 500 plantations, undertook cultivation of sugar, coffee, cocoa, cotton, and tobacco, and established a picturesque French-Creole social ambiance revolving around elegant balls, concerts, *banquets*, country *fetes*, and town *soirees*.

During Carnival, from Sunday to Tuesday night (*Mardi Gras*) before Ash Wednesday, revelers promenaded through the streets and drove in carriages paying house visits and attending parties and balls. Consistent with the fact that Spanish domination in Trinidad was characterized by some degree of ethnic accommodation, upper-class free coloreds (Africans) actively took part in the Carnival celebrations with the French and Spanish elites. Coloreds and whites danced the same European social dances of the Gavotte, Minuet, Quadrille, and Waltz played by pianos, violins, and flutes. Carnival was almost exclusively an upper-class affair and planters' devotion to the European Courts was reflected in their elaborate costumes representing the European

nobility or other elegant characters (Lee in Ryan ed., 1991).

Slaves were barred from Carnival altogether, but occasional dances among them were tolerated mainly for therapeutic purposes and as occasional entertainment for the whites. Sunday slave dances, however, were often attacked by the Church as sacrilegious and contrary to the pure motions of the spirit of Christianity. The sexually suggestive pelvic movements typical of African fertility rituals were stereotyped as sinful, and laws against 'lewd and lascivious' movements lasted well into the 20th century. The white planter class, the Church, and the so regarded 'respectable' coloreds sought constantly to censor the African elements of dancing, to purge its potential explosive quality, and to reduce it to harmless spectacle.

From 1797, with British rule, new laws affected the freedom of coloreds. Their participation in Carnival was restricted, for example, by banning the use of face-masks or by subjecting participants to a curfew (Hill, 1972). Similarly, Christmas, military parades, and musters practiced by the Britons provided the colored elite a visual reminder of European superiority. While Carnival under the previous Spanish rule used to affirm some solidarity between all free men, now it came to emphasize color divisions between ethnic groups as well as the tenuous solidarity between French and British (Lee in Ryan ed., 1991).

Post-Emancipation Carnival: a Black 'Thang'

For a few years after 1834, emancipation of Africans from slavery was celebrated on August 1st with the *Canboulay* procession (from French *cannes brulees*, burnt canes), a torchlight parade remembering slavery through reenacting the burning of sugar-cane fields¹. Traditionally, the fields were set on fire to eliminate snakes, pests, and loose foliage before the cutting of the canes. At times, slaves destroyed months of labor as protest against inhuman working conditions by igniting the fields prematurely.

Soon the Emancipation procession was moved to coincide with the pre-Lenten festivities and the spirit of Carnival turned from an elite frivolity to black mobilization. The African heritage became increasingly visible and drums, stick-fighting (a form of martial arts where two opponents battle with wooden sticks) and *kalinda* dances (African moves complementing the art of stick-fighting) replaced the fiddle, the sword, and the Minuet respectively. Carnival acquired a new ritualistic meaning rooted in the experience of slavery and it became a celebration of African freedom.

¹ *Canboulay* was a torch parade accompanied by heavy drumming, hooting, singing, and shouting. Participants were often masked and violent fights would break between *kalinda* champions and stick-fighters. Police and so called 'respectable' Trinidadians were concerned by the presence of so many armed men in an aggressive mood, saw the danger of fire from the torches, and were bothered by the continuous noise throughout the celebration.

Throughout the 19th century the proprietor class and the government made it difficult for freed slaves to acquire land. This contributed to ex-slaves migrating *en masse* to the urban centers where limited employment opportunities and slum conditions intensified social conflicts. Furthermore, between 1838 and 1931 about 100,000 immigrants from Barbados, St. Vincent, Grenada, Guadeloupe, and Martinique entered Trinidad attracted by field wages higher than those offered in their own countries. Although Christian, these newcomers introduced a variety of art forms and distinctive customs of African derivation, including *Obeah* (a magical practice) and the Orisha and Rada religions (both from the West African pantheon, respectively from Yorubaland, Nigeria and from Dahomey, now Republic of Benin) (Brereton, 1979).

During Carnival time, individual frustrations as well as tensions between rival neighborhoods were ritualized in violent practices including confrontational *kalinda* dancing, debasing singing, and stick-fighting. A large number of 'mas' bands also mocked the government militia and the British brigades called in muster, while burlesque characters like the *Dame Lorraine* ridiculed the eccentricities of the planters' wives.

Warner's work on Carnival's participation patterns among distinct communities in Port-of-Spain observed that the bands from the eastern slums 'behind the bridge' were partially organized according to ethnic and tribal grouping of immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean islands (1982).

Particularly Barbadians increased the element of urban conflicts. While the language spoken by the majority of the masses was French *Patois*, Barbadians spoke English and were often the preferred applicants for posts within the colonial government. By virtue of their African heritage they could participate in the life of the *proletariat*, but at the same time their knowledge of the officialdom's language made them the successful competitors for jobs within the service.

Among the urban underworld of the neighborhood backyards, the *jamette*² Carnival milieu thrived on legendary stick-fighters, drummers, *kalinda* dancers, *chantuelles* (French for singers), corner-boys, badjohns (reckless outlaws and fight instigators), and prostitutes. 'Mas' bands were formed to compete among one another for a limited socio-economic and political turf. Each bandleader, the *chantuelle*, harangued the fighters into action, poured scorn on the rival groups, and sustained the courage of the champion with call-and-response singing.

Stick-fighting became a highly formalized Carnival expression and developed its own rules, rituals, and a coded language. In the tradition of the African ancestral reverence, the spirits of former dead stick-fighters were invoked before a battle, and stick-fighting was often bound with *Obeah* practices. *Kalinda* dancing was also a confrontational practice and often witnessed extreme behaviors such as stone and razor fights.

² Corrupted from the French *diametre* and referred to those who behaved outside the perimeter.

Although there were some female participants, it was a predominantly African male world where the verbal rhetoric was the prelude to a game in which manhood, status, group identity, and sometimes life itself were at stake. The use of hyperbole and metaphor might have been a survival of the traditional chants of the ancient Mandingo *griots*. *Kalinda* dances and stick-fights, however, came to represent the expressions of social processes of displacement, urbanization, and syncretism unique to 19th century Trinidad (Pearse, 1956).

As a response to the Africanization of Carnival, the white elite including the British, French, and Spaniards, withdrew from the public domain and started years of attacks and denunciations intended to suppress the street version of Carnival. While the French and the Spaniards largely entertained themselves in exclusive house parties, an unsupportive press and various British governors encouraged the curtailing or banning of Carnival completely. Each attempt met stiffer resistance by lower-class Africans, who occasionally lost lives during riots and brutal encounters with the police.

African street revelers were still largely illiterate ex-slaves and many 'mas' bands were re-constructions of West African tribes and West Indian communities. However, Carnival increasingly reflected the presence of a more diverse population, which by the 19th century comprised Venezuelans, Portuguese, Chinese, Middle Easterners, and Indians. All these groups brought their own indigenous practices whose elements slowly entered the

Carnival artistic niche. European chivalric and aristocratic characters such as Kings and Queens, as well as nobility titles became a permanent feature of Carnival. Indians contributed to African artistry their own excellence in both drumming and a slightly different version of stick-fighting. Venezuelans introduced 'mas' characters such as the *burroquite* (a donkey-headed costume) as well as *parang* music. Wild Red Indians' 'mas' was fashioned after the South American Indian tribes from the Orinoco River who had traded in the past along the southern coast of Trinidad. These 'mas' revelers even developed a series of songs and speeches among themselves based on the *Guarahoons'* language of an Amazonian Amerindian tribe (Oxaal, 1982).

Canboulay Riots: the Return of the Middle Class

Carnival was a constant thorn in the side of the British colonial administration, which did not have any desire to see it persist. The 1881 *Canboulay Riots* were sparked as a response to another attempt by the English Royal Commission to subdue Carnival³. The banning of skin-drums in

³ In 1880, Police Chief Commandant Baker called on the marchers to surrender their torches, staves, and drums. The revelers, maybe caught by surprise, did so without resistance. In 1881, however, the 'mas' bands organized themselves to resist police interference and agreed not to fight against each other. When the police tried to seize torches and sticks they met a unified front and about forty officers were injured. By the next day, the Executive City Council, fearing serious riots, pleaded with the Governor to make a conciliatory gesture to avert civil disorder. The Governor assured the crowd that there was no intention to suppress Carnival and that police interference was only due to concerns for safety. He also promised that the police would be confined to the barracks until the end of the celebrations, and the rest of Carnival passed peacefully except for a couple of demonstrations with Baker effigies burnt outside the police quarters. The following year *Canboulay* was officially

1883 sparked the Arouca Riots, and the Cedros Riots of 1895 followed another clamp-down on Carnival practices. Torches and stick-fighting were also banned, and the *Canboulay* procession was forced to start on Monday mornings rather than Sunday night. Each year at Carnival time until the 1950's, two British warships were stationed off the coast of Trinidad ready to intervene against the potentially rebellious population.

Carnival, nevertheless, could not be completely suppressed (Oxaal, 1982). In fact, restraining rules implemented by the establishment became the catalysts for the creation of alternative artistic forms. For example, the drum prohibition led to the introduction of the *tambour-bamboo* (French for bamboo drum), an instrument of possible West-African origin. Bamboo stems were cut at different lengths and tapped with sticks or against the ground. This music was harmonized together with musicians playing spoons against bottles filled with various amount of water, as well as an assortment of *Bermudez* biscuit tin lids, old car parts, saucepans, and empty paint cans. As elaborated in chapter ten, *tambour-bamboo* became a powerful symbol of the African struggle against colonial control.

The Sunday night *Canboulay* procession was replaced by *J'Ouvert* (French for opening day), a chaotic parade of rough characters and homemade 'mas' based on popular lore. This included *soucoyants*

authorized, but elaborate precautions were taken against disorder, including the presence of two British warships in the harbor of Port-of-Spain. It was only in 1884, that the Governor finally prohibited torch processions, drum beating, and disorderly assembly of more than ten people armed with any weapon.

(vampires), *diablesses* (devils), phantoms, *loup-garous* (werewolves), *jab-jabs* (devilish court jesters with whips), *jab molassie* (devilish characters with horns, whistles, and pitchforks), imps, demonic princes, beasts, and *moko-jumbie* (stilt acrobats).

Although throughout the 19th century the lower African class remained a constant feature of Carnival, as time passed communal gatherings started to include a wider range of people. Carnival was increasingly enjoying the covert sympathies of businessmen concerned with the preservation of an event that by then had become the source of sizable profits. Some French and Spanish upper-class Creoles also valued Carnival as the genuine heritage of the old French-Catholic tradition, and African rhythms were appreciated by Latin-Europeans in spite of the disregard manifested by the Anglo-Saxons.

Regardless of this appreciation, the emerging middle class tried to 'mellow' African extreme forms of expression and did so by censoring the abrasive lyrics and aggressive gestures satirizing the respectable society or inciting dissension and violence. The physical and belligerent behavior of the *jamette* Carnival was being replaced by a more constructive artistic dueling between 'mas' bands.

City merchants sponsored groups who "played by the rules" and, although riding in coaches to separate themselves from the tramping African crowd, even people of higher status slowly returned to the streets. By the end of the century Carnival was not any longer an African preserve.

Hill described that a 'mas' band from the eastern part of town would tramp through the streets chanting choruses to the *tambour-bamboo* and bottle-and-spoon orchestras. Another group, led by their *chantuelle* and dancing to call-and-response refrains accompanied by string-band music, was drawn from the colored middle class. Yet, a third group from the high colored and white merchant elite paraded in carriages or on decorated flatbeds as pirates, gypsies, or harem damsels (Hill, 1972).

20th Century Carnival: Equal but Separate

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the Carnival Improvement Committee of the City Council of Port-of-Spain was in charge of the Carnival in Marine Square, near the eastern and poorer section of the capital city. The Carnival at the Queen's Park Savannah, then the white preserve of clubs with exclusive membership, was instead organized by various civic organizations raising money for charitable purposes.

The Protestant Church authorities and the conservative *Port-of-Spain Gazette* continued to malign both Carnivals for their irreverence toward the Church's traditional moral values. Meanwhile the other two local newspapers, the *Guardian* and *Argos*, limited their critical remarks to the designation of specific city routes that revelers had to follow. The *Argos* insisted on holding the celebrations in the working class areas, while the *Guardian* supported

moving them to the wealthy St. Clair neighborhood near the Savannah to provide a spectacle for the well to do.

In a context Bourdieu would identify as one that ritually differentiates people and establishes social lines (1991), beginning in 1946 Trinidadian businessmen privately organized a Carnival Queen beauty pageant. The winner was to become the country representative and symbolically renew, through a color-conscious competition, what Bourdieu defined the “no social boundary trespassing.” For years the judges selected white or light-skinned Queens and when, in the mid-1950’s, an African contestant won the crown, she was denied the title. The African masses exploded and the new government under E.E. Williams had to intervene to resolve the Queen pageant issue. A Carnival Development Committee (later on the National Carnival Commission or NCC) was appointed to oversee the conduct of all future Carnival activities, finally combining the two Carnivals into a single national celebration (Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1984).

This event marked a turning point in the life of Carnival. By the late 1950’s, Carnival became subject of scholarly work. In 1957 the *Caribbean Quarterly* published a double issue on Carnival, social studies were undertaken, and theses and publications started to appear. By being invested with the appropriateness of the language of academic authority and through its diffusion among legitimate receivers, Carnival became a validated social practice. It was purged of its most extreme *jammed* elements, its vicious

confrontations and its obscene parades of prostitutes singing lewd songs. The so called 'respectable' classes had taken over and molded a Carnival now acceptable to nearly all segments of the population.

Yet, although by mid-century the crossing of bands along the streets was expected to be an occasion for hearty rivalry in acting and singing, bands coming down from 'behind the bridge' continued to engage in rough confrontations. During the 1940's and behind closed doors (due to the suspension of Carnival from 1942 and 1945 because of WWII), steeldrums were created in the squatted hills east of Port-of Spain. They brought to the streets another powerful symbol of social cohesion between musicians, band supporters, and local residents who were mainly Africans. Artistic competitions between these neighborhoods did not prevent the aggressive energy of the unemployed and destitute, and music duels often spilled into bottle, stick, and cutlass fights.

Notwithstanding this early violent history, by the second half of the 20th century steelbands achieved a widespread acceptance even amongst upper strata revelers. While the dainty feet of the elite resting on the lorries started to touch the streets, steelbands decided it was time to mount wheeled metal platforms where they still remain today. In the true spirit of Carnival, the high was made low and the lowly set on high (Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1984).

Like steeldrum music, calypso music also developed out of a milieu of violent self-assertiveness. In line with the physical encounters and verbal aggression of *kalinda* dances, stick-fighting, and steelbands, the early form of calypso songs called *Sans Humanite'* (French for, without humanity) attested to this common background. Rhetorical force, splendid language, and excellence of tongue created a new music, which voiced the tensions of urbanization, immigration, and African self-definition (Crowley, 1996). Although calypso is considered a purely Trinidadian expression, its form of delivery found its origins in the West African tradition of social commentary, blame, and derision, while folk-song melodies from all over the West Indies contributed to its stylistic form.

Chantuelles and their solos leading the 'mas' band were increasingly replaced by calypsonians performing in backyard tents in front of a paying audience. Tensions reigned between the rowdier *chantuelles* and the intellectual calypsonians. The latter were concerned with the social acceptance of their music and struggled to raise its standards; the pun emerged as one of the cardinal features of calypso lyrics. *Chantuelles*, instead, attempted to perpetuate the *jamette* Carnival tradition and stressed sexual scandals and vituperation. Both groups of musicians, however, fought against the pressure of the authorities, mainly the Church, the British, and the privileged class who continued to attempt to suppress African derived practices and silence the masses (Trotman in Ryan ed., 1991).

Between 1942 and 1945 Carnival was suspended, although calypso tents were permitted to provide nightly entertainment to the British and American servicemen. The interest of U.S. forces in calypso contributed to its wide acceptance and its becoming a marketable business. Calypsonians left their role as 'mas' bandleaders, turned professionals, and went to New York City to cut records. So called 'respectable' people started to visit calypso tents, lyrics were published, and merchants and organizations offered prizes for excellence in theme, execution, and creativity. The social function of calypso was evident, and audiences frequently offered verses of their own to ridicule an opponent or to share their views. The official press complained that distinguished persons' names were being sullied, but calypsonians persevered in their mission despite being often brought to Court and fined (Brereton, 1979).

Also born in this century was the character of *Pierrot Grenade*, a poor man's parody of the French *Pierrot*. He exploited the linguistic and cultural ambivalence felt by a population that hovered between a dying language, *Patois* and a half-acquired one from the colonizer, English. *Patois* continued to be used because most of the officialdom could not understand it and well into the 1930's, Colonial Secretary's Officers suspiciously censored *patois* words submitted for scrutiny. *Pierrot Grenade* had a repertoire of grandiose speeches based on historical writings of great kings and military campaigners, as well as on literary classics and orations. In a spelling game he would break

up a word into two or more syllables and make puns on each one, sometimes in both *Patois* and English.

The media, including the radio, newspapers, and movies contributed to the creation of other characters such as the Yankee Minstrel and the Tennessee Cowboy. African revelers turned the latter into a voluble desperado: the Midnight Robber (Oxaal, 1982). This comedian became a master of malapropism, showing off a personalized dictionary and indulging in pompous words. He was the modern West African *griot* and commented without mercy on the society that surrounded him. The literary knowledge and scholarly proclivity of the African calypsonians and the new 'mas' characters suggest their origin among better-educated social strata than the traditional *jamette* Carnival protagonists.

"I like the old talk, Robber and American Indians; at one time I had as much as 64 speeches in my brain and you don't have to walk with a book, you got to have them here.."

*Hark, hark you scrums of de earth, you two headed serpents,
you dog of a Saxon: stand back for it was written in de Book of the Midnight
Robber that all mock men like you should be buried alive.
Away down from de high class region
from de phantom graveyard comes I
dis impregnable, insurmountable, and unconquerable
King Grabbeler...*

*It is I who have fed and graduate the highly selected
 mountains of Himalayas,
 for I fought, conquer, ate, and drunk
 the blood and flesh of prehistoric monsters
 dat is de dragon, de luciphobia, de hyfiphobian and de hypollos
 which weighted no less than fourteen tons...
 So stand back mockman and tell me if it is your cowardice or bravery
 dat cause you to travel into dis dismal track."*

(Recorded by Trinidad & Tobago TV, February 1980)

Throughout its two centuries of history, the Trinidadian Carnival has not been just an aesthetic extravaganza but more importantly an instrument that revelers and audiences have manipulated to pursue specific interests. Carnival's history of violence and controversies suggests that since its inception it has functioned as a stage where a variety of collectivities waved symbols and hurled invectives at one another. To this day, carnival in Trinidad continues to be a space where different segments of the population re-define African, Indian, and Trinidadian identities.

Today's Carnival

Today's Trinidadian Carnival is not a statutory holiday. Yet the government, private industry, and various institutions facilitate employees' participation. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Community Development are involved in making arrangements to

accommodate the events. Schools are closed and all public servants get at least one of the two Carnival days off. Almost 10 percent of the entire local population actively takes part in the celebrations (Mason, 1998). The local police have become world experts in addressing the problem of crowd control and have been studied by other police forces worldwide. The Ministry of Transport issues temporary measures dealing with the presence of almost 200,000 revelers, foreign and local. Normal street-traffic laws are suspended and on Carnival days vehicular circulation in the capital city is restricted to traffic directly related to the celebrations.

Many West Indians living abroad, united by a strong sense of identity and camaraderie annually renew their vow of cultural loyalty. The Customs and Immigration Departments have instituted procedures to facilitate their pilgrimage home for Carnival and make a major effort to accommodate the flow of foreign visitors as well. Meanwhile, West Indians unable to attend the 'true Trini' Carnival settle for one of the many West Indian-style carnivals transplanted to major cities including New York City, Miami, Boston, Nottin' Hill (London), Liverpool, and Toronto, Canada.

Back in Trinidad 'mas' camps, the workshops where Carnival costumes are made become crowded after the Christmas season with volunteers working into the early hours of the morning. Steelband rehearsals are longer and more frequent, while new calypso and soca songs are released and broadcast non-stop on most radio stations. *Fetes*, both private affairs and

neighborhood parties, are scheduled just about every night of the week.

While Saturday before *Mardi Gras* is the Kiddies' Carnival Day (Figures 10 and 11), during the early hours of Monday a speech by the city Mayor and the firing of a cannon mark the official beginning of Carnival: *J'Ouvert*. A leftover from colonial times when the British tried to exert some control over Carnival, this official opening is ignored by all, and revelers may start *J'Ouvert* as early as Sunday night.

J'Ouvert attracts a large number of male revelers who in the thousands celebrate the dawn of Carnival covered with mud, oil, grease, colorful paints, and tar (Figure 12). The costume used is often minimal, and even street dwellers can join the fun by 'playing themselves'. Sweat, axle grease, molasses, paint, and alcohol become the main ingredients and shouts, grunts, and raucous songs are not taken seriously. Night creatures such as ghosts, imps, robbers, monsters, and devils indulge in an orgy of percussive music, noise making, dancing, drinking, and *wining* (strong pelvic gyrations) until light, when *ole 'mas'* (traditional characters) revelers will replace them along the streets (Figure 13).

Some of the violent spirit of the *jamenttes* partly survives in the surrealistic night scene of *J'Ouvert*. Here transvestitism, overt sexuality, drunkenness, vulgarity, and licentiousness mix with bumping and grinding. For those who have experienced upward social mobility the need to participate in Carnival to fantasize the transformation of pauper to King has lost

relevance. Instead, *J'Ouvert* may acquire a symbolic value for its historical tie with the Emancipation Day celebrations and the *Canboulay* procession. Representing exclusively creatures of the night, by morning *J'Ouvert* revelers are expected to start winding their way home where a cathartic sleep will restore the energies lost during hours of 'jump-up' and dancing. For some of them, playing pretty 'mas' the following couple of days would be an unforgivable frivolity (Ahye in Ryan ed., 1991).

In contrast to the male dominated *J'Ouvert* celebrations, 80 percent of the revelers parading around town on Monday and Tuesday are women (Figure 14). They play pretty 'mas' in organized bands and enjoy the opportunity for overt show-off and adulation provided by appearing beautiful on the various stages set up along the streets of the capital city. On Monday, the dress is still casual. Most play traditional characters and wear old costumes or part of what will be their best *Mardi Gras* outfit. Throughout Monday and Tuesday, scores of 18 wheel-trucks loaded with musicians and state-of-the-art sound systems deliver full blast, to the human tide shuffling behind, the latest soca tunes vying for the 'Road March' title (Figure 15).

Finally on Carnival Tuesday, although sleep deprived and having pranced already for miles, bands of thousands of people elaborately dressed appear for the main event, the crossing of the Queen's Park Savannah stage. The grand display of exhibitionism and sexual energy is enhanced by costume jewelry, iridescent body suits, colorful banners, wings, feathers, and yards and

yards of fabric shaped into unreal forms that leap and whirl for all to see. Within the Carnival culture of *bacchanal* (extreme confusion), this is the day everybody has been living for. TIDCO, the Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago proudly refer to Carnival as "The Biggest Show on Earth!"

Today, expenses for Carnival *fetes*, admission to calypso tents, food, drinks, and costumes can be extremely draining even for those who have been making financial sacrifices throughout the year⁴. Youths in the low-income bracket or persons unemployed, unable or uninterested in playing pretty 'mas', hang out along the run leading to the Savannah stage and form massive groups indulging in whatever becomes available: alcohol, drugs, or sex.

Some men wander the streets alone and with their friends, or sit around drinking rum and looking at the women parading in the streets. Other men, among the most regarded in the community, are occupying leadership roles and act as officials, organizers, and adjudicators. Artists, again mainly men, are costume designers, wire benders, construction engineers, technicians, composers, or musicians. They are the 'movers' of Carnival, while the revelers, mainly women, are the 'shakers' (Ahye in Ryan ed., 1991).

⁴ In 1976, P. Minshall's 'mas' band 'Paradise Lost' consisted of 1,600 members and cost almost a quarter of a million dollars to put on the road. Although it usually requires a full year of preparation to organize a 'mas' band of such proportions, 'Paradise Lost' took only seven months from conceptualization to completion. Many considered such a short period of time inadequate and disapproved of the enormous burden put on producers and volunteer workers.

Within the last hour of Tuesday, after the *last lap* (time around), the streets become suddenly quiet and efficient crews of city workers clean up the vestiges of this mesmerizing celebration. Respectful of the religious rules of Lent, at one time no radio-station would broadcast 'jump up' music after Carnival, and on Ash Wednesday even the wildest revelers could be found attending Mass. Nowadays post-carnival shows and *fetes* are becoming more common. Commercial ventures organize them at Manzanilla or Maracas Beach and the winners of various Carnival competitions are brought together for exhibition performances.

Carnival time is being stretched by an industry that recognizes the money making potential of this celebration. Reasons for commercialization aside, it is true that, although it is after Christmas that activities pick up at a frantic pace, a Carnival mentality pervades the country throughout the year. As soon as revelers recuperate from the intense activities on Monday and Tuesday, they start saving money for the upcoming Carnival while artists begin dreaming of next year's creations.

DISCUSSION

The Commodification of Carnival

This section describes the monetary impact Carnival has on the entertainment sector of Trinidad as well as the effects this commercial success has on Carnival itself. The local tourist industry packages this celebration as a cultural commodity creating job opportunities, earning foreign exchange, and positioning the country in the global market. The government funds, through the University of the West Indies, a Carnival Institute that manages and maximizes the financial potential of the celebration, while the National Carnival Commission (NCC) functions as a major proponent of Carnival commercialization.

The Commission, although a non-profit making statutory body, manages a budget assigned to Carnival of almost U.S.\$ 1.6 million. In 1995 it was estimated that the foreign exchange injected into the local economy was about U.S.\$ 35 million and the total economic impact of Carnival of U.S.\$ 60 million. Furthermore, the consolidation of a Caribbean diasporic market based on foreign carnivals has opened year-round job opportunities for Trinidadian artists including musicians, 'mas' designers, and other professionals.

Unofficial estimates suggest that soca bands and artists alone earn up to U.S.\$ 6 million just by participating in overseas transnational carnivals (Henry

and Nurse, 1996). While these numbers may appear to point out the well-being of the 'mother' celebration, its booming success has resulted in the incorporation of new elements demanded by consumers.

The local officialdom itself has been sympathetic to these requests and has openly manifested disapproval for what is considered by many revelers Carnival's very soul: disorderly conduct, *bacchanal*, and the 'we like it so syndrome.' During each post-Carnival season the establishment works hard to 'tame' Carnival and to make it fit for the ideal 'Paradise Island' tourist package.

Representatives of various official entities brainstorm to design improvement strategies and, based on the preamble that "the government is not content with 'destructive' traditions", they present proposals to increase the professionalism and marketability of Carnival. This mission statement to transform a people's *fete* into a more 'professional' product is accompanied by a list of changes aiming at its more efficient handling. The list includes items such as parade routes, ticket sales, broadcasting programs, show schedules, competition formats, intellectual rights, and so on (4/23/1997: Post-Carnival meeting with the Ministry of Culture and Community Development, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Consumer Affairs, and the NCC).

For example, the 1997 proposal to 'improve' Carnival showed an emphasis on the issues of televising and Internetting. Increasingly, TV crews from all over the world have become part of a Carnival whose representations

are broadcast worldwide. Distant consumers access these images promulgated by the media, but cannot obviously negotiate the pre-packaged products. The NCC is strongly concerned about the power of these representations and strategizes ways to hold a tight control on the choreography of the Carnival events as well as their dissemination to outside audiences.

Another recurrent issue surrounding Carnival is its parade route. The congestion of the 'mas' bands piling up before entering the Savannah stage continues to be an annual concern. Invariably, the planned improvements do not work as hoped and bands of up to thousands of people find themselves amassed along the route. All decked up and frustrated, revelers wait for hours before being able to walk in front of the Carnival judges' podium for a short 15-minute to an hour performance, depending on the size of the 'mas' band. To add insult to the injury, 'mas' bands are not only bound to parade along the set route, but are openly discouraged by the authorities to break free while trying to avoid getting stuck. Some of my informants who have attended celebrations locally and abroad expressed their concern that the Trinidadian Carnival is turning into a New Orleans *Mardi Gras* style parade for viewers to consume rather than for locals to enjoy.

In the musical arena, disputes arise over catchy soca songs lacking a social commentary (locally known as the 'jam and wine' type) and replacing traditional calypsos. The 'jam and wine' songs heard on the radio limit their

lyrics to meaningless choruses about sex and exhortations to have a good time, while politically minded singers get virtually no air play. Arrow's 1980's frivolous hit 'Hot Hot Hot' sold over four million copies and set the example for many imitators who, to this day, find faithful *aficionados* mainly among the younger generations. A market prioritizing dance music that can be easily exported worldwide is also contributing to the decreased relevance of the art of improvisation, once a valued element in ex-tempo (*extempore*) and humorous calypsos.

Similarly Panorama, the main steeldrum Carnival competition, continues to provoke controversy over whether, and to what extent, it should accommodate the requirements of modern recording technologies at the expense of losing its original acoustic qualities and social characteristics. Largely due to the ongoing refusal on the part of players to use electronic amplification, steelbands have become very marginal to the Carnival street celebrations. Cheaper and more effective alternatives to steelbands have replaced them, and to entertain their parading revelers, 'mas' bands hire 18-wheel trucks loaded with soca musicians blasting tunes through state-of-the-art sound systems.

Interests revolving around the emergence of a new cultural export sector are emphasizing Carnival's aesthetic component while downplaying its social commentary that for centuries has been enriching the country's political discourse. The original intrinsic core of Carnival, which includes the rational

and irrational, the transgressional and the subversive is being restrained, and its schizophrenic structure is weakening. People's manipulation of its expressive power is being superseded by rules of corporate profits that are turning Carnival into a commodified spectacle. Production guidelines are increasingly turning a spontaneous celebration into a big show while boosting its fiscal performance. During my stay, an almost ridiculous situation developed between the local newspaper *Trinidad Guardian* and the National Carnival Bands Association. The *Guardian* was forced to cancel its yearly Carnival souvenir insert because the Association requested that the bands pictured in the published photos should receive monetary compensation!

Although correctly defined as a celebration 'of the people' in that it is partly funded through the public budget, Carnival is developing into an expression of cultural tourism entertaining an a-political audience. Carnival is also increasingly functioning as a safety-valve mechanism for the local and foreign middle-class reveler with the consequence that, while visually spectacular, it is becoming inoffensive and lacking in spontaneous vitality. It is turning into an innocuous opportunity combining financial prosperity with extreme, but socially unconcerned, playfulness. The bottom up *fete* of the masses is turning into a top down spectacle for unengaged revelers.

Meanwhile U.S. fashion clothes, fast food, and new sets of attitudes and behaviors are also transforming the local culture. Typical North American values, such as an obsession for superficial beauty and size, are invading

Carnival and are encouraging expressions increasingly devoid of local historical elements. The cohesiveness of Carnival is also being challenged by a growing gap between generations, a phenomenon appearing in Trinidad only recently. Along the U.S. societal model, advertisers, trendsetters, and the music industry are targeting specific events to certain age groups, therefore fostering a Carnival experience that is different for each generation.

Yet, in spite of being bombarded by various modernizing pressures, and although increasingly regulated by an NCC setting a commercial tone for most of its activities, Carnival continues to convey messages of dissent of actors and bystanders. This resistance and its many forms of articulation testify to the vibrancy of Trinidadian society whose cultural resilience may be strong enough to constructively assimilate outside elements rather than succumb to them.

Carnival's Opposing Forces

Carnival in Trinidad originated as an expression of the French plantocracy's domination. After emancipation in 1838, it soon turned into an African form of self-assertion and a vehicle for the African masses' defiance against the dominant elite. As recently as the 1970's, masqueraders dressed up as '1001 White Devils' marched in the hundreds hurling violent slogans against the establishment. As Powrie suggested decades ago, Carnival

celebrates emancipation from slavery; it praises the African drum and the sweet sound of the steeldrum born in the black slums 'behind the bridge'; it breaks all rules of good behavior, of dietary restrictions, familial responsibilities, and sexual mores. Carnival belongs to the African community and it is a myth that everybody joins in breaking down all social borders (1956).

To this day African artists use calypso music, the official voice of Carnival, as a device to publicly address social issues and to denounce corrupt practices (Trotman in Ryan ed., 1991; Warner, 1982). More importantly, calypso often states the ethnic resentment Africans feel toward others, in particular Indians. Partly due to these reasons and despite the fact that a large number of Trinidadians view Carnival as an institution with a national character, segments of the population relate to Carnival in different ways.

Some Indians perceive the 'Carnival icon' as the exact opposite of those values of religious dedication, familial devotion, individual control, and respect for oneself that both the ideal Hindu and Muslim devotee attempt to pursue. They experience Carnival as the antithesis of 'Indian-ness' and as a provocative tool still in the hands of the African community. Although the establishment has been presenting Carnival, calypso, and steeldrums as emblems of national cohesiveness, unsupportive Indians view them as expressions of disregard toward their own thousand-year-old culture.

They question the legitimacy of these alleged 'patriotic symbols' as well as their ability to function as representations of a national consciousness. Some Indians feel that this artistic triad is not a shared voice but rather a cultural imposition the Afro-Creole elite has been forcing over the entire society.

Conservative Indians, as well as Christians of various ethnic backgrounds, skeptical about the alleged image of a 'Carnival for all' are disgusted by the loudness and the license characterizing the celebrations. During Carnival time, they choose to leave the city and relax in the quietness of the countryside or the beach. Other non-participating Indians take financial advantage of the festivities and pitch food-tents catering to the numerous revelers. One common opinion summarizes all too well a frequent economic reality surrounding Carnival: Africans spend money, Indians make money.

While all classes theoretically participate in Carnival, the growing cost involved acts as a discriminatory factor in patterns of participation. Except for *J'Ouvert*, where its simplicity invites anyone to take part, attendance in Carnival events displays a correlation with status and wealth. Even 'mas' bands, apparently spontaneous forms of associations developed along friendship lines, neighborly relations, or working connections, possess very specific class as well as ethnic and gender connotations.

Although open for anybody to join, financial dues as well as clear symbolic elements of status strongly affect revelers' preferences for one 'mas' band or the other. There are 'artistic' bands, 'light-skinned' bands, 'Afro-

centric' bands, 'male' bands, 'commercial' bands, 'violent' bands, 'high-status' bands, and so on. This fact suggests that Carnival is not only a two-day artistic extravaganza, but also a reflection of individual and collective positioning within the larger social organization. Local hierarchies and the structure of the pre-existing authority are more or less subtly reasserted, while rules of socialization partially determine behaviors throughout the festivities.

A gender differentiation has also been very evident throughout Carnival history and still persists today. Women don costumes designed by men, dance to music played by men, follow Carnival rules written by men, 'jump-up' on stage looking good for male judges, and so on. Some may interpret such phenomenon as female participants taking a passive role and consuming a Carnival created by males. Van Koningsbruggen, however, stressed the element of empowerment experienced by Trinidadian women flaunting their sexuality as a form of protest against mores and double-standards imposed by a puritanical, chauvinistic society. Female participation is seen as reflecting an increased degree of liberation, which women express during Carnival times by acting "extreme" (Steward, 1981). While seemingly a form of escapism, female appropriation of pretty 'mas' may be an attempt to design a new type of gender relations through expressions of womanhood bordering on sexual aggression (1997).

Eriksen's work also recognized the importance of restrictions as well as the role reputation and respectability play in organizing Trinidadian societal expectations. He contrasted the Dionysic life of the African lower-class male with the restricted, formal, European-influenced, middle-class 'female' ethic (1992). As described above and in the previous chapter, my fieldwork observations indicated that, although through different expressions like Carnival or *chutney* music, both African and Indian women are presently challenging traditional gender roles.

In spite of its discriminating elements redefining the ethnic, class, and gender lines found in the local society, Carnival has also acquired an important function in the government's discourse on national integration. The Trinidadian establishment, although recognizing the uniquely mixed demographic character of the local population, is maneuvering Carnival to further a concept of patriotic unity and shared citizenry. It is burdening the celebrations with ideal images whose paramount assertion is a nationalistic ethic of cultural harmony.

The officialdom proudly encourages patriotic sentiments among participants and observers who are bombarded with proclamations such as 'One Love Country' and 'Paradise Island'. The national motto: 'Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve' is displayed everywhere, and the anthem praising equality between all races and credos is the starter for every artistic gathering. The tourist industry addresses the Trinidadian population with the

nick-name *cala/oo*, while calypso, steeldrums, and beautiful 'mas' creations are projected as symbols for 'community-building' and inclusion. Especially for the Afro-Creole middle class, Carnival fulfills a joyful image of consensus and operates as the flag of a nationalist movement lead by these 'Rainbow People' of Trinidad.

Lee emphasized the integrative potential of Carnival as: "it expressed a distinctive Trinidadian style, it was indigenous, it cut across race, class, color, and creed, and the urban masses strongly identified with it" (1991:429). Ahye also suggested that every ethnic group is accounted for in Carnival and that barriers of distinction are coming down. People of European descent have produced many traditional *o/e* 'mas' and Indians are making a significant entry into Carnival as well. As early as the 1960's the urban Indians from St. James entered the Starlight steelband in Woodbrook, both middle-class, mixed neighborhoods of the capital city. Since then, an increasing number of educated and Christianized Indians are intermingling during Carnival times and building long-term relations with fellow African citizens. Although more recently, Ahye continued, even Hindus have begun joining the celebrations feeling it was time for them to become part of this national event (in Ryan ed., 1991).

Despite these developments, within the Carnival context and outside it, a shared national identity is not yet clearly affirmed and the alleged 'cultural national treasures' of Carnival, calypso, and steeldrum still encompass elements of tension. Ethnic, age, occupational, and neighborhood groups may become involved as a unified collectivity at one level (particularly the one that the officialdom attempts to emphasize for the outside observers), but at other levels antagonistic feelings continue to be channeled through artistic structures of differentiation. Here, actors are presented alternatives ranging from an idealized national consensus to rather divisive group-based agendas. In this multi-layered landscape, a not necessarily congruent social action develops.

Extremisms and the Future of Carnival

Today's Trinidadian Carnival, although increasingly made accessible to the foreign consumer as part of a cultural-tourism package deal, is not exempt from controversy. Annually, issues comprising group identity, nationalism, economics, and morality fuel confrontational debates involving different segments of the local community. Social cleavages continue to be exposed and Carnival's multi-vocality persists in challenging both the existential and the political domains. Carnival's relevance within its originating society still lies in its ability to expose the tensions characterizing a country deeply affected by

complex dynamics of modernization, globalization, and differentiation.

Sponsorship by local companies such as Carib beer and Chubby soft-drinks, or by international corporations such as American Airlines, Nestle', or Coca-Cola Co. attempt to contribute controlling mechanisms for artists and events not meeting some basic standards of conduct. During my fieldwork a major controversy arose around Montano's song 'Toro, Toro' whose excited call 'to charge the bull' brought some young concert-goers to stampede onto the stage. Following the accident the media, the government, and some local organizations considered some restrictive measures against the future performances of the song. Others argued against the various attempts at controlling Carnival and expressed a desire to let disorder run free in a true *bacchanal* spirit.

Each year before Carnival the government puts in place pieces of legislation limiting artistic license. State-sponsored calypso tents for example, do not allow explicit obscene language, and 'mas' bands are prohibited from portraying religious figures or ridiculing religious practices. Also, during my fieldwork major disagreements revolved around the government's consideration of censoring lyrics inciting to ethnic hatred.

Humor easily turns into satire, and sarcasm into incitement to rowdy behavior, violence, and divisiveness. People moving in groups may tend to get out of hand, a mass greatly outnumbering stewards and police can be difficult to control, and alcohol and drugs often magnify grievances, which may

lead to criminal acts. Clearly, questionable behaviors still characterize Carnival, and various segments of the population, including the more religious ones, strongly disapprove of these practices.

Particularly small Churches and Evangelical groups have been very vocal in denouncing the lasciviousness of Carnival. The reprimanded conduct includes heavy consumption of alcohol, gang warfare, the 'bikini-ization' of the costumes and casual sexual interactions especially among teens. An abnormal increase in birth rates nine months after each Carnival, locally referred as the 'Carnival- baby syndrome', is confirmed each year (Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1984). The Islamic and Hindu communities also take a similarly unsympathetic stand toward Carnival's debauchery although extreme anti-Carnival views are more commonly held by religious leaders and organizations rather than at the individual level.

Revelers' complaints, instead, focus on the structural changes Carnival is undergoing. These include the excessive number of the 'mas' band members swelling into the thousands, the fact that costume-making is becoming a mass-production process, the disappearance of traditional Carnival characters, and the extravagant cost of materials and labor for the costumes. The press is also often criticized for fueling debates and, although supportive of Carnival, journalists have been occasionally accused of generating controversies between local groups to increase newsstand sales.

As mentioned in the previous section, many supporters of Carnival complain that the government is increasingly creating a sober Carnival ready for immediate consumption by the outside world. They also criticize the establishment for allowing the homogenizing flux of globalization to channel the peculiarities that make this celebration unique. Carnival is even accused of having lost its original African energy and of becoming a playground for those 'high coloreds' (lighter shaded Afro-Creoles) who share a Westernized worldview and a focus on profits.

Although the validity of the criticisms attacking the massification of Carnival and its ethically questionable edges cannot be doubted, the historical value of this celebration and its ability to foster a dialogue still persist. Even though elevated to national status, Carnival continues to embody a potential for protest and subversion that confirms its political relevance. As illustrated by its past, Carnival has been operating as an ongoing drama unfolding from the whims and interests of changing times and people. Molded, redefined, desecrated, and praised, it has maintained this important role for centuries.

Throughout its history, the ethos of Carnival has been permeating many facets of the Trinidadian society and today it seems to be further reaching into domains traditionally left out. This process of expansion is taking place through a couple of avenues. Although the Indian presence in the Port-of-Spain Carnival continues to be relatively limited, in San Fernando and the central region Indian revelers are becoming more visible. Their participation is

bringing deeper changes to Carnival practices particularly through the successful entrance of Indian artistic forms in the national and international market. *Chutney* singing, for example, is contributing not only musical innovations but new ideological perspectives as well. Alternative Carnival models are also provided through the intervention of the current political elite, now inclusive of a stronger Indian component. Clearly, this historically Euro-African festival may continue to sanction its role in the construction and maintenance of this country. More importantly, through a whole new host of cross-fertilization processes Carnival may one day really fulfill a nationalist ideal of universal participation.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

INTRODUCTION

In Trinidad, most local religious events are renowned for their esthetic beauty, their colors, and their visual and sonic intensity (Nunley and Bettelheim, 1988). More importantly, they reflect the local population's complex cultural makeup. Boundary-defining practices and symbolic displays assert group identity and communicate differences to outsiders. Through rituals, an ideological solidarity is proposed to participants while current social concerns are expressed and negotiated. This chapter focuses on the role played by three major Indian religious celebrations in both assuring a sense of continuity with the motherland and in defining a diasporic Indian identity within the modern Trinidadian milieu.

Forced since their arrival on the island to cope with a social context defined mainly by the white and Afro-Creole elites, Indians have struggled to gain access to resources mainly for others. By perpetuating communal celebrations for over two hundred years and by using norms and teachings often extracted from epic, religious texts (mainly the *Rig Veda* and *Bhagavadgita* for Hindus and the *Qur'an* for Muslims), Indian ethnic and

religious identity has been inculcated to group members. Although to some degree accommodating toward others, this Indian self-representation based on unique values such as dedication to family and community, hard work, and financial success has symbolized a will to contest a pre-imposed, foreign ideological environment.

The development of an Indian self opposed to a stereotypical African one based on conspicuous consumption, short-term concerns, and lack of commitment has facilitated the positioning of Indians outside the historical white/African dichotomy. During the years of colonial resistance, sections of the local African community have occasionally called for the 'black races' (Africans and Indians) to unite against the Western invader (the British, since the 18th century). However, only on rare occasions have the two groups actually fought side by side toward a common goal. Today, while it is true that globalizing forces are favoring syncretic processes between peoples and ideas, Trinidadian society continues to display the workings of an ethnic discourse based on an African/Indian opposition.

This diversification of ethos is imparted to the members of each collectivity through religious rituals and a variety of artistic forms including theater productions, dramatic readings, music, and singing. The perpetuation of cultural elements under different artistic guises has eased a process of mediation between customs originated from a distant past and a very different present landscape.

This capacity of adaptation has been subtle among the Indian community, which has been able to manifest some degree of ideological unity while operating a balance between tradition and innovation. In fall, for example, *Ramleela*, the longest-running Hindu street theatre event in the Caribbean, keeps most town villagers occupied for nine consecutive days. Throughout Trinidad, mainly Indian residents come together to act out sections of the Hindu scriptures: parts of the *Ramayan* are read to music, and brightly-costumed dancers perform the narrative (Figures 16 and 17). *Ramleela* culminates with an impressive graphic reminder of the triumph of good over evil. Effigies, 20' high of the defeated villain *Rawan*, are burnt in memorable nightly bonfires under the mesmerized eyes of entire towns. Interestingly enough, during my fieldwork I observed the malignant *Rawan* from two different Hindu temples wearing Nike shoes and warm-up pants! (Figure 18).

THE HINDU FESTIVALS OF *DIVALI* AND *PHAGWA*

Divali, meaning 'cluster or row of lights', is one of the most exquisite moments on the Hindu calendar. It falls during the *Kartik* month (between October and November) and celebrates positive virtues by honoring Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and good-fortune. At least three weeks before the observance, pious Hindus fast to cleanse their body and to bring calm and peacefulness to their mind. During the event, temples and homes are

thoroughly cleaned and *deyas* (tiny terracotta lamps filled with oil and a cotton wick) are lit in the belief that brightness will lead Lakshmi to visit people's most special spaces (Figure 19). Families conduct *pujas* (prayer ceremonies) in their homes or backyard temples and, after the prayers, the community welcomes the less fortunate with offerings of food and other items. Hospitality is also extended to friends and neighbors who are given the sacred *parsad*, a sweet dough mixed with fruits and nuts made especially for religious occasions.

At the community level and throughout Trinidad, thousands of *deyas* are strung along buildings, gardens, walkways, and windowsills and lit at dusk. Both Hindus and non-Hindus participate in this portion of the celebration and raise elaborate bamboo and wattle structures to hold many *deyas* (Figure 20). As darkness falls, hills and plains flicker magically, and the streets of cities and small villages glow brightly. Rural towns in 'Indian Country', where a large number of Indian communities can be found, compete for the honor of the best decorations, and cultural shows entertain audiences with re-enactments of mythological stories, dance and music performances, and guest celebrities.

The *Divali Nagar* site, in the heart of the predominantly Indian Caroni region, functions as the hub for Indian arts and cultural exhibits. Established in 1987 after a massive electoral defeat of the African based government, the *Divali Nagar* has acquired a major political significance within the Indian community. Activities held there during *Divali* have elevated the scale of this

Hindu celebration, while a variety of other cultural events organized throughout the year contribute to turn this site into a new tourist destination.

As *Divali* takes on significance at the national level, many people including Hindus are becoming increasingly concerned about its growing materialistic element expressed through commercial activities and entertainment shows. As an alternative, more religiously oriented Hindus choose to attend *Divali* celebrations organized at smaller centers or temples throughout the country. Similarly, inspired by the original spirituality of *Divali*, various non-Hindu associations offer non-denominational public prayers in an effort to bring together people united by shared fundamental human values.

The festival of Holi or Holika, popularly called *Phagwa* in Trinidad, is observed during the full moon in the Hindu month of *Phalgun* (between February and March). *Phagwa* is a religious and harvest celebration saluting the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It is a time of joyfulness and merriment marked by singing lively music, dancing, and playing. Early in the morning trucks and vans bring participants to the celebration grounds. These are open spaces along the East-West Corridor or further south in 'Indian Country'. Drawing inspiration from a Puranic tale, a *pundit* blesses a special space, and an effigy of Holika, the evil sister of the demon King Hiranyakashipu, is burnt and her ashes scattered. The lighting of the fire (Holika Dahan) is a metaphor for the triumph of good over evil and the breaking of superficial barriers between all people.

Initially wearing white clothes symbolizing purity, participants throughout the day spray onto one another perfumed water or special dyes of various colors, particularly a red and purple one called *abeer*. After a few hours of merriment, people's outfits, hair, and skin turn into the bright colors of spring (Figure 21). On a stage, performers narrate the legend where lord Vishnu, the preserver of the universe, destroys Holika through divine intervention. *Chowta/s*, devotional folk songs mainly originated from the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, are presented to recreate scenes from the life of Krishna, or to recall the beauty of the spring season and the new life flowing out of a quiet winter (Figure 22).

Pichakaree music is also associated with *Phagwa*, but although based on traditional *chowtal* tunes, it is a more recent artistic form. As mentioned in chapter seven, *pichakaree* singing emerged out of the Indian community's need to voice its own experience and social matters. In the same way that *abeer* sprayed out of a PVC/plastic tubular contraptions (also called *pichakaree*) leaves a colorful mark wherever it lands, *pichakaree* songs are intended to leave a mark on the listeners.

The sharing of concerns by Indian artists through song lyrics has brought Indians, as well as some Africans, to view *pichakaree* as the Indian version of calypso. However, unlike calypso, its message continues to be relevant mainly within the local Hindu world. Even if in 1995, the year marking 150 years of Indian presence in Trinidad, the *Pichakaree* competition was

aired live on national TV, this forum has not yet gained a wide visibility among non-Indian audiences. Similarly, *Phagwa* with its exuberance, playful behavior and color is often referred to as 'Indian Carnival', but it has not been attributed the same recognition as the 'true Trini' Carnival.

The *pichakaree* show I attend is held at the historical Caroni Company estate near Couva. The maxi-taxi driver drops me a few miles from my destination, but fortunately the Caroni Company police spots me and gives me a ride all the way to my destination. The grounds are perfectly manicured and include the housing of the managerial staff. From the building where the event is held there is a breathtaking view of the sugar plantations down below. During the rainy season between June and December the canes approach 10' in height and small villages are lost in an ocean of green. The fate of an entire country (and region) was once determined by this endless stretch of velvety canes gently moving under the afternoon breeze!

I am brought back to my work by the voice of a renowned Hindu community activist presenting the program to an audience exclusively Indian. In his brief introduction, he explains the importance of four religious-cultural facets: *bhajan* (religious songs), *bhashan* (language), *bhojan* (food), and *bhushan* (garment). Cultivating these cultural aspects will benefit the Indian community and guarantee its success.

The whole extravaganza lasts three hours and includes mainly a festival of *pichakaree* music with an Indian fashion show and a couple of Indian dance performances. The *pichakaree* competition presents singers with widely varying levels of experience. One younger man forgets parts of his song, while other artists display a high level of confidence performing on stage. The topics of the lyrics include current political controversies, gender relations, Indian history, and issues of nationalism.

During the intermission, a dance group from Chaguanas performs on a couple of popular Indian songs. These musical segments are short excerpts of Indian movies and are sung in Hindi. Local artists lip-synching these songs often have only a vague idea of what they are saying.

The dance performance is followed by a fashion show displaying traditional Indian clothes. Elaborated, gold embroidered, colorful *saris* (full-length dresses with scarves), *shalwars* (two-piece mid-length tops with pants), *gararas* (dresses with long, full skirts), and *shararas* (multi-layered dresses with different pieces such as vests or jackets) are paraded in front of the audience. Red, god Rama's color is prominent with dark greens, yellows, and purples. At the end, Indian food is served and flowers are given to the Indian High Commissioner's wife and, to my surprise, to the other special guest among the audience, myself. Flattered and speechless I thank the organizers for the warm welcome!

Later on that year I also attend the *Phagwa* 1998 *Pichakaree* launch. This official meeting discusses organizational and financial details as well as ways to present the *pichakaree* theme of the year, crime. The committee includes Indian men and women active in the general affair of the community. They redefine the judging criteria and the social responsibility of the artists and emphasize that lyrics, unlike calypso, have to refrain from character assassination and vulgarities. Songs have to explore issues pertinent to the Indian community and to educate and motivate by suggesting possible solutions to problems. One individual insists on the importance of morals and value-maintenance within the community and proposes a separate category for young *pichakaree* singers. The comment is appreciated but the limited budget makes the idea not yet feasible.

Meanwhile, a few women are cooking Chinese rice (subject to various jokes because everybody there is Indian) which will be served with *paste/s* (a Venezuelan delicacy), potato salad, sandwiches, sweets, and ice-cream. During dinner some women perform *pichakaree* songs from previous years, a *Dougla* friend of the host sings a calypso that he cuts short because it partly deals with meat (the audience is mainly vegetarian), and another white friend improvises a *parang* tune with a guitar.

THE MUSLIM FESTIVAL OF HOSAY

The annual observance of *Hosay*, or *Muharram*, entered Trinidad with the first Indian *Shi'ite* Muslim indentured laborers (Singh, 1988). The public part of *Hosay* is a three-day commemoration of the Kerbala massacre in 680 AD and the martyrdom of Hassan and Husayn, the grandsons of the Holy Prophet Mohammed. It is celebrated on the 10th day of the first Muslim month, *Muharram* (between April and May), in the neighborhood of St. James and in the town of Cedros, in south Trinidad. Traditionally, members of the entire Muslim community have shared the expenses to organize *Hosay*, build the tomb replicas, feed the volunteer workers, and manufacture the musical instruments accompanying the parade.

The reenactment of the funeral procession is made with *tadjahs*, which are replicas of the Husayn's mausoleum. The *tadjahs* are assembled on a wheeled wooden structure that stands about 15' high (not more because of the height of electrical cables in the streets) and are made with bamboo, cardboard, and polyurethane covered by colorful *papier-mache'*, aluminum foil, and cloth (Figure 23). The five *tadjahs* of St. James are constructed in backyards over a 40-day period or less. During that time, the working space or *imambarah*, is considered sacred and no alcohol, skimpy clothing, or vices are allowed (Figure 24).

On the first day of the month of *Muharram* a local *imam* comes to the backyards and recites the prayers to sanctify the grounds for the following ten days. At his arrival, all of the men and a couple of women in the Bis-Ali yard line up behind him and pray facing the sacred *chowk* (small stark white altar-like space not far from the *imambarah*) oriented towards Mecca (Figure 25). Devotees have their heads covered with a variety of caps and hats, and a little boy wears a bandanna with the American flag. After the prayers, one of the leaders of the yard organizes the food and distributes it to those present. This includes different types of sweets such as *sawine*, made from milk and vermicelli-like noodles, *malida* some type of bread pudding with raisins, dates and prunes, as well as tamarind balls and candies.

Big Hosay Night

After more than a month spent building the *tadjahs*, making the drums, praying, and rehearsing, on May 17th the awaited time arrives. During the first two public nights of the celebration, Flag Night and Small Hosay Night, families and friends from each of the five *tadjah*-yards of St. James have paraded until 4 am. On Flag Night they have wheeled a platform covered with flags, signifying the standards of Husayn's peace party. On Small Hosay Night they have carried portable, two to four foot models of Hassan's tomb together with some flags. After a brief three-hour sleep, that same morning

the men have returned to the yard to cook the food that later will break the 40-day fast. Unshaved and tired, they have that unique sparkle in their eyes typical of those whose emotional state has overcome the pangs of physical exhaustion.

On Big Hosay Night at the Bis-Ali yard I witness the assembling of the upper part of the *tadjah* (the 'crowning') just brought out for the first time from the enclosed workshop. A dozen male participants are excitedly refining the details of the turrets and the main dome. Shining under the bright streetlights, the *tadjah* is resplendent in its refined mixture of colorful metal foils and filigree design. It looks just like a Westerner would envision the Saudi Arabian King's minaret in a scene from the 'Tales of a 1001 Nights.' After the prayers, the altar is cleaned up and people involved in the construction of the *tadjah* consume together the big meal prepared from early morning.

Meanwhile hundreds of people have been crowding the Western Main Road for hours, with some anxiously waiting for the moon carriers to open the funeral procession and others, mostly African bystanders, *liming* with their friends and enjoying food and drink. Finally, a big commotion announces the rushed arrival of the red moon being carried from Bourmes Road. The moon is an awkward and incredibly heavy construction spanning eight feet from top to bottom. The moon structure connects to long wooden poles, which the carriers strap to their waist halter (Figure 26). Given the weight of the contraption a team of spinners is used to keep the moon in a state of perpetual

motion. Each man, his shoulders heavily padded with towels, alternates the twirling of the moon in short, frenzied turns. The moon team of dancers/carriers seems almost possessed, and I am barely able to back up through the crowd to avoid the frantic twirling of the moon, which occasionally misses people's heads by only inches.

The moons (there are two: a red and a green one, representing death by sword and by poison) 'kiss' (symbolically touch) the *tadjahs* as they come across them along the parading route. This gesture symbolizes the connection between the religious values the crescent moons stand for, and the lives of the two commemorated Muslim heroes. Although a funeral procession, the parade has quite a festive tone and, unlike the *Hosay* celebrations among *Shi'ites* in the Middle East, no self-flagellation or mourning are present (Chelkowski ed., 1979).

On the contrary, Indian men, women and children proudly push their magnificent creations, while drummers entertain throughout the night with captivating rhythms of the bass and snare-like *tassa* drums. A lot of followers are *wining* behind their favorite *tadjah*/drummer group and the excitement reaches its peak when all five *tahjahs* parade behind each other along the main road. This year, Ghulam Hussain's yard is displaying a blue and white *tadjah* with large, shiny, silver crescent moon-shaped ornaments. The *tadjah* from Cocorite is also blue and white, but subtler and a little darker. The *Panchayat's tadjah* from Bay Road is white and silver with vague hues of pink

and light blue. The Balma yard presents a white *tadjah* with big flowers on the main cupola resembling a laced wedding cake. Finally, the one from Bournes Road, built by the Bis-Ali family, shines with striking elegance in dark lilac, gold, white, and green colors. Everybody is having a great time, participants as well as bystanders.

To add poetry to such an already dreamlike scenario, temporary fires are lit at the corners of the streets. Musicians use these fires by placing their drums close to the flames to tighten up the skin of the drumheads, which lose their high pitch after only 30 minutes of intensive beating (Figure 27). Inside each paraded *tadjah* structure, bags full of shredded paper are stored for tuning, and drummers from the same yard avoid interrupting their music by taking shifts in gathering around the fires. Musicians from all *tadjah*-yards share the fires and it is not unusual for players from one yard to temporarily join friends from another yard. The music includes different rhythms called 'hands', which are played in specific situations. The most exciting beat is the battle 'hand', which is played when two *tadjahs* cross each other and symbolically fight a battle. Other 'hands' include a preparation rhythm, a marching rhythm, and the funeral one beaten only at the end of the three-day celebration.

Police are present but, as usual, they remain very inconspicuous. When a drunken man approaches a group of teenager *tassa* drummers, the men of that yard huddle around him and push the outsider away from the

children. A massive drummer grabs his bass drum stick from his pocket and tells me, "just in case."

While we are marching by the new park near the police station, a group of Muslims dressed in black are praying and hitting their chests. Mainly Africans, this group is a stricter section of the *Shi'ite* community, the Bilal Muslim Mission of Americas. A guest *imam* from Zanzibar is leading this group protest. This is centered around their complaint that the Trinidadian *Hosay* is including too many aesthetic and entertaining elements and is not following a format more in line with a funeral observance. The Mission members point out that drumming, dancing, and socializing characterize the occasion while in countries such as Iran, India, and Lebanon, *Hosay* is a time of deep sacrifice. There, men punish their bodies and women cry and sing *maseehaha* (wailing songs of mourning) lamenting the suffering of the two Muslim heroes.

To the Mission's accusations that the local community is performing a sacrilegious ritual, some of my informants point out that most people from the yards in St. James fast for 40 days, while members of the Bilal Muslim Mission only avoid eating between sunrise and sunset on the last two days. Even though I have not followed this controversy in detail, I notice that once again, the local Indian community has appropriated only specific elements of the Muslim ideology and accommodated the stricter requirements of the Islamic orthodoxy to the mellower 'live and let live' of the 'Trini' lifestyle. Despite the

questioned legitimacy of the Trinidadian *Hosay* by the fundamentalist Bilal Mission as well as by *Sunnis* (a Muslim sect strongly concerned with the maintenance of the purity of Islam), local *Shi'ites* and their friends paraded well into the morning hours when, by public ordinance, all activities had to stop.

By noon the next day, Karbala Day, the *tadjahs* and the moons are moved to the local karbala (burial grounds) granted by the British during colonial times. Here the final prayers are pronounced. On the following day, the labor of many weeks is dissolved in a cathartic closing ritual. While in the past the entire *tadjahs* were released along the coast and immersed into the sea, today local environmental and safety laws prohibit this practice. To save money for the permit to transport the entire *tadjahs* along an alternative route (to the sea), the yards of St. James first tear them down and collect the small pieces in garbage bags. In a much less poetic ceremony, piles of gray plastic bags replace the *tadjahs* themselves during the final destination into the Caribbean Sea.

NEW TRENDS

For centuries the *Hosay* celebration has been part of the *Shi'ite* Muslim tradition throughout the world, and in Trinidad too it has functioned as a cultural expression drawing boundaries around the Indo-Muslim community.

As noted, however, heterogeneous components are increasingly present during its creation, production, and consumption so that a two-way feedback between *Hosay* and outside influences has become evident. In the words of an Indian *tadjah* builder, "close contact of Trinidadian Muslims with people of different background is continuously bringing changes in the ways the tradition is experienced by participants as well as onlookers."

The *tadjah*-yards in St. James, for example, are located in a mixed neighborhood where people of different beliefs and lifestyles are exposed to *Hosay*. Non-participant neighbors of all ethnicities and religions have come to relish some aspects of the celebration, especially the skillfully built, colorful *tadjahs*, as well as the drumming rehearsed each night before *Hosay*. Furthermore, during the public parade, non-Muslims transform this funeral procession into a pretext for socialization.

Today, it is also becoming common for non-Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds, to get involved in *Hosay* regardless of their religious affiliation. In Cedros, the only part of Trinidad other than St. James where *Hosay* is commemorated, the Muslim presence has been so limited numerically that in order to carry on the festival, even groups traditionally excluded from the sacred spaces and practices have been welcome. During my fieldwork, women of various ethnic backgrounds in Cedros built the *tadjahs* and played the accompanying sacred music. The only requirements to be followed

consisted of respecting the sacredness of the *imambarah* through personal cleanliness and avoidance of liquors, fried foods, meat, and sexual relations.

The present multi-vocality surrounding *Hosay* confirms that, although originating within a very specific context, the festival is increasingly affected by other cultural worlds. A diverse community has become able to share the experience by mixing profane elements with the historical religious dimension (Korom, 1994). Paraded along a main road filled with bars and music clubs, and against strict Muslim etiquette, for many *Hosay* is ironically conjuring up images of heavy drinking, *wining*, and *feting*.

To add to these various worlds impinging on this Muslim tradition, today's *Hosay* is also acquiring a strong economic component. Besides benefiting St. James's neighboring businesses, its artistic appeal has caught the attention of the wider tourist industry. Partly due to the government's interest in enhancing the presence of Indian culture on the national stage, *Hosay* is being advertised as a source of profits. Government funding is now made available each year to the five *tadjah*-yards in St. James, and in 1997 for the first time, the yards in Cedros received a sum as well. The media too is giving more coverage to this fascinating tradition, and travel brochures are pitching *Hosay* as a cultural affair worth the attention of foreign visitors.

Not everybody is pleased with this widespread interest. The acceptance of *Hosay* by mainstream society coincides with new practices, and market demands are altering its significance. As with Carnival, *Hosay* too may

turn into a tourist attraction manipulated by an industry interested in selling the commemoration at the expense of its original meaning. To counteract the many foreign readings of this religious text, the small minority of local *Shi'ites* insists on making known the spiritual notion of *Hosay* as a solemn observance of Islamic history. Their perspective is presented through educational lectures and easy-to-read pamphlets passed out to bystanders near the *tadjah*-yards and along the parade route. The core of their message is that, although everybody is welcome to take part in the procession, people are expected to join the ritual in a shared spirit of Muslim brotherhood based on self-respect and regard for Islamic values.

CONCLUSIONS

The observations made in this chapter suggest that religious events are stages for artistic creation as well as political contestation. In Trinidad, where social divisions have run for centuries along many lines, different ideologies and interests continue to characterize groups' agendas. During festivals such as *Phagwa*, *Divali*, and *Hosay*, themes of ethnic and religious continuity intersect with current realities, which redefine the symbolic and performative character of each event.

In particular the controversy on the alleged 'vulgarization' of these celebrations also involves a discourse about differentiation. For Indian orthodox religious leaders the association with non-Indian elements jeopardizes the integrity of these traditional markers. Their Creolization is seen as antithetical to the essence of an Indian culture that for centuries has allowed the Indian community to distance itself from polluting, alien influences. This complexity is evidenced by a substratum of ritual practice upon which disparate historical and economic experiences are often incongruently grafted together.

Processes of syncretism, however are not religious aberrations but rather the affirmation of a spiritual world-view able to recognize the 'All in One' above either the African or the Indian cores. For centuries in Trinidad, European demonology, African ancestor worship and fetishism, and Asian mysticism have not only coexisted but blended as well. During my fieldwork I found Hindu deities, *lotas* (little water goblets), and *deyas* having their place in more than one African Orisha altar. One *babaloa* (African Orisha priest) justified the eclecticism of his religious paraphernalia by explaining to me that all humanity comes from the same place and so even typical Hindu images are part of the same ancestral African heritage. Similarly, Spiritual Baptist churches share the sacred symbols of the cross, the shepherd's rod, and the bell of Evangelism with the Indian *ohm* sign, as well as with the African drum, sword, and olive oil goblet.

In Siparia, south Trinidad, a statue of the Catholic Virgin *Divina Pastora* (Divine Shepherdess) is celebrated by Hindus as an incarnation of *Devi-Shakti*, and referred as *Soparee Mai*. During the yearly festival on the second Sunday after Easter, Christians worship the *Divina Pastora* by singing Catholic hymns and lighting candles. Hindus offer *Soparee Mai* rice, *halwah* (cream of wheat), and jewelry and also practice the *Mundan Sanskar*, or the shaving of the first hair of babies.

Finally, Evangelical movements are promulgating a message of harmony and 'one-ness'. Evangelical churches are accepting everyone irrespective of ethnicity under the paramount relationship to one god. In this religious context, ethnic antagonisms pervading Trinidadian life in all other spheres become conspicuously absent, and inter-ethnic marriages are supported.

The witnessing of syncretisms between a number of religions and moral notions leads people to acknowledge the possibility for ideological common grounds. These shrines, yards, churches, and temples function as religious centers as well as sources of social and financial support to members often in need of much more than just spiritual guidance. This universalistic view transcending peculiarities contributes to the ability of performing the difficult task of coexistence in such a heterogeneous community.

Other issues concerning Trinidadian religious practices include the impact of Westernization, as well as their turning into controlled secular productions. By making a clear distinction between Western ideology and modernization some leaders have encouraged their communities to adopt the material benefits of modernization but to reject the values associated with the broader Western belief system.

Hosay and *Divali*, for example, are increasingly maneuvered to become tourist attractions as fiscally viable as Carnival. Although presented as parts of an Indian heritage able to counteract a national entertainment sector often perceived as mainly African, *Phagwa* and *Hosay* have acquired a defined pragmatic function. They are assets in the government's agenda to extend the traditional tourist (i.e., Carnival) season from February-March well into late spring, when the two celebrations are observed.

After being removed from the exclusive care of the local community, these events are made accessible to outsiders whose presence automatically introduces new interpretations of the exposed practices. If increasingly managed by an entertainment industry interested in marketability and profitability, their emphasis may turn from spiritual content to material form.

Hosay especially, although in Trinidad it has never been a mourning remembrance defined by the same depth of grief observed in the East, is running the risk of becoming 'Carnivalized' by glitter and ostentation, while the parading of the *tadjahs* is taking on an inappropriately festive air. Similarly,

many perceive that *Divali* is representing a lucrative commercial venture rather than an opportunity for individual growth and communal giving.

Although group affiliations are manifested through the idioms of religion and art, sacred commemorations are dynamic responses to the surrounding social milieu. The trends described above not only suggest that cultural expressions are continuously redefined in an attempt to mediate past and present , but also that political and economic factors more in line with current globalizing forces may, one day, supersede historical meanings and ethnic identities.

CHAPTER X

THE POLITICIZATION OF SPACE AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

ETHNICITY, RELIGION, AND REVITALIZATION

As mentioned in previous chapters, Trinidad's post-independence efforts to construct a unifying national identity developed within an aggressively changing social milieu. Throughout this process, formal and informal citizen organizations as well as the state, exploited the different beliefs and practices thriving in this multi-cultural society. Some insisted on the relevance of class and on its potential to bring ethnicities together, others proposed clear nationalistic ideals to further group integration, and others again promoted stronger religious incorporations, which at times ended up boosting the ethnic component rather than reducing it.

Overall the results have been ambiguous and, although overt ethnic strategies have not been welcome in the public domain, ethnicity continues to be routinely ascribed as a key discriminating dimension. The religious card, in particular, has been extensively exploited in a nationalist as well as an ethnicist scheme, and sacred traditions and symbolisms have been adopted as powerful markers in the political debate. Group-consciousness have become central components in many religious organizations.

Throughout the centuries of colonial control on the island, a religious void was created by the colonizers' explicit interest in erasing all non-Western ancestral practices. Furthermore, during the most recent British occupation, religious affiliation functioned as a major factor in determining the closeness of outsiders to the hegemonic group. Membership to the supposedly 'correct' congregation meant opportunities for higher education or class mobility. The large presence of Presbyterians within the Indian community, for example, attests to the old Canadian missionaries' policy of offering free education to Hindus and Muslims willing to convert (Brereton and Dookeran eds., 1982).

Presently, 29.3 percent of the population in Trinidad is Catholic, 23.8 percent Hindu, 10.9 percent Anglican, 11 percent Protestant (other than Anglican and Presbyterian), 5.8 percent Muslim, 3.4 percent Presbyterian, and 15.8 percent declares itself as 'other' (TIDCO Statistical Unit, 1997). Membership to a specific congregation in the post-colonial period has no longer been a critical factor for upward social mobility. Moreover, during most official occasions the three major denominations (Christian, Hindu, and Muslim) are acknowledged. Nevertheless, some correlation between religion affiliations and ethnic identity exists: Orisha, Rada and Spiritual Baptist are African, Hinduism and Presbyterianism are Indian. Islam is deemed both Indian and African. This heterogeneous religious profile of the Trinidadian society has been widely discussed (Clarke, 1986; Klass, 1961, 1991; LaGuerre ed., 1974, 1982; Nevadomsky, 1980; Ryan ed., 1991; Vertovec,

1992). Consequently, this chapter restricts its focus to some of the implications that religion and religious revitalization have for the ethnic and nationalistic discourse.

A number of studies have dealt specifically with the notion of tradition as a selected and often invented process (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Jameson, 1981; Shils, 1981; Williams, 1977; Wagner, 1981). Williams defined tradition as "an intentionally selective version of shaping the past which is tied, though often in complex and hidden ways, to explicit contemporary pressures and limits" (1977:116). Bourdieu (1977) and Jameson (1984) exposed the historicity of tradition and its operating not as a defined object, but rather as an element in the dialectic process of inherited constructions and present historical frameworks. Along these theoretical lines this chapter analyzes how tradition reconciles individual agency with the present social structure. It also discusses how the intersection of the local religious substrate with pressures to innovation results in interpretative processes embodying both, continuity with the past and discontinuity from it.

The Indian workers who initially entered Trinidad under the indentured system did not envision settling permanently; their goal was to return to the motherland after improving their financial condition. However, only one-fifth of all indentured laborers returned to India and subsequent generations of settlers did not possess a memory of their country that could perpetuate the

original 'Indian-ness.' Time-induced forgetfulness and the surrounding foreign milieu altered the way today's Trinidadian Indians define themselves. In particular, the desire for an often idealized ancestral identity has brought about the need for tutored remembrance. Mainly religious schools and cultural associations have carried on this commitment to historical preservation.

The initial experience of displacement and the necessity of negotiating traditional practices in a new diasporic environment prompted Indians to feel 'out of place' and to realize that culture and identity are social rather than natural constructions. As suggested by Appadurai, people forced closer to the edge of a foreign society learn to consciously create choices and representations, rather than simply reproduce practices and dispositions (1990). Reacting to an experience of dislocation and isolation, the local Indian community has fought a position of marginality and slowly gained full participation in the Trinidadian socio-political life.

In particular, since the 1970's, well-educated Indians have initiated a process of cultural and religious revitalization that strongly relies on the dissemination of popular Indian culture (Vertovec, 1992). Hindu informants taking part in this 'Hindu Renaissance' confirmed to me the strong commitment by the community to bolster religious traditions and practices¹.

¹ A.F.C. Wallace defined a revitalization movement as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture. Most revitalization movements involve quasi-magical, prophetic, millenarian and messianic cults, which seek to bring about some kind of spiritually-ordained golden era (1956). Hindu revitalization in Trinidad involves none of these latter features.

It is interesting to note, for example, that while men and women in their thirties frequently hold English first names, among younger generations the names are prevalently Indian. Birth, in his work on Trinidadian Hinduism, described the resurgence of 'three-day bamboo' traditional weddings² (Figure 28), *Barahis* (birth celebrations), and cremation practices (Figure 29) for the purpose of ethnic definition (1993). Similar research by Ratimaya further documented the relevance of religion in defining Indian identity (1995). From past displacement, emplacement has followed and today's Indians are successfully reclaiming their own space as well as the cultural memories that space usually embodies.

Similarly, the increased worldwide ethnic consciousness of the last few decades has coincided in Trinidad with a flourishing of religious practices of African origin. Much of the cultural retention that survived the slave holocaust was already found at the religious level. Out of this spiritual fulcrum an Afro-centric view has developed based on self-reliance and a longing for total emancipation from post-colonial hegemony. Traditional values and practices once forbidden or simply ridiculed have been re-appropriated, and even humble daily-life rituals have been recognized as solemn moments of the rich African heritage.

² Traditional Hindu weddings involve the most intricate set of rites in the entire religious corpus. The many stages begin with the meeting to discuss a possible engagement and continue, at least six months later, with three days of ritual activities performed at the home of each engaged individual before the actual marriage ceremony.

Furthermore, although the continent of Africa is for most Trinidadian Africans as inaccessible as the Indian sub-continent is for most Trinidadian Indians, the presence of black diasporic communities throughout the Caribbean and the Americas facilitated the maintenance of strong pan-African sentiments. The strategic position of Trinidad in the Caribbean Sea also brought the installment of a number of U.S. military bases which, since the beginning of this century, have linked the local community with the politically influential African-American milieu. These surrounding ideologies, including the U.S. Black Movement and Jamaican Rastafarianism, have been very effective in shaping the local African identity.

Although second-hand, this ongoing exposure of the African community to the history and traditions from the motherland is contributing to the revitalization of forgotten religious practices. It is through this strengthened bond with religion that Africans are creating new social identities proudly modeled on an ancestral past. Funeral ceremonies, feasts, healing practices, ancestor veneration, ritual possession, and divination are increasingly used as manifestations of a pan-African cultural distinctiveness (Figures 30 to 33).

The fact that during local Orisha ceremonies such as Sarakas and Thanksgiving feasts, hardly any of the participants understand the meaning of the *babaloa's* Yoruba recitatives, does not seem to diminish in any way the group's religious experience. Today, over 50 well-defined Orisha yards are attracting a growing number of followers. Acts of Parliament have

incorporated two Orisha organizations, whose social activities are known throughout the island, and heads of the Orisha faith will soon be given legal power to grant marriage certificates (*Trinidad Guardian*, 1997a).

An African male activist and retired policeman informs me at the last moment about a Kwanzaa celebration performed at one of the very few Orisha yards located in the Port-of-Spain area (centuries of colonial persecutions contributed to their often hidden locations). After wandering around the neighborhood searching for Orisha flags, I arrive at the yard where the event has already begun. An African woman dressed in white comes out of the *palais* where the gathering takes place, calms down the barking dogs, and welcomes me to the event. She conducts a brief propitiatory ceremony to Eshu, the Orisha power (deity) in charge of making sure that rituals are properly conducted. She recites a prayer asking the divine gatekeeper to accept my presence and invites me to touch the stone-altar she has wetted with drops of water. Before entering the *palais* (a partially enclosed area where the celebrations are performed) I take my shoes off, touch the dirt-floor with my hand at the entrance, and quickly arrange a handkerchief over my head as a show of respect toward the Orishas.

Inside, there are two drummers playing for a group of 20 adults, a few accompanied by small children. Most are wearing traditional African garbs and headpieces; loose-fitting printed pants or skirts, colorful long tops, and African jewelry. The *babaloa* is a fair-skinned African man with long dreads.

He soon interrupts the drumming with a short lecture on the tradition and meaning of Kwanzaa. He emphasizes the importance of self-determination (the focus of the second day of Kwanzaa) and the need for African people to improve themselves. He also pursues its educational segment by quizzing those in attendance with a few religious definitions, including Yoruba terms commonly used during the rituals.

The drumming starts again; first we clap from our seats, then we all get up, clasp hands, and start walking in a circle around the center pole while repeating the *baba/oa*'s recitatives in a call-and-response fashion. The pole, a thick piece of wood partly covered with black and pink cotton material, symbolizes the connection between earth and the great above. Five chicken feathers surround the base of the pole along with a jug of alcohol, one of olive oil, one of wine, a goblet of water, a musical instrument shaped like a metal box, and a calabash shell containing various seeds.

After the music and the singing stops, the *baba/oa* remarks on the importance of changing Christian names into African ones as a step towards gaining self-consciousness. He explains the unfairness of the practice of renaming the slaves as they arrived in the Americas and suggests that the re-appropriation of traditional names is a way of righting these historical wrongs. He then invites the participants to express their own thoughts about Kwanzaa.

A light-skinned man with Amerindian blood questions the relevance of changing names when the major problem of the African community is its

economics. He warns that acquiring an African name for the sake of it can be meaningless or even negative. To support his point he mentions several Africans whom he considered "vile" and whose actions stain the African names they carry. He adds that the more relevant aspect of changing one's name revolves around acquiring its symbolic power and that this implies the challenging task of adopting new behaviors.

More importantly, although he recognizes the relevance of culture and religion, he believes that financial irresponsibility and dependency are what make the African community so weak. He hints that Africans often worry about *liming* and having a good time, rather than taking a stronger social and political stand like the Hindu community does all of the time. These statements arouse various responses among the audience and more than a few individuals appear a little uncomfortable.

Finally, the drums start to summon again the Orisha deities and they accompany the *baba/oa's* dance around the center pole. He pours a little olive oil on the heads of some individuals, rubs it in, and invites them to join him in the dance. They all move in circle formation at alternate directions while the bystanders clap and chant with the drummers. The rhythms are speeding up and, while some seem reluctant to let themselves go, others quickly become possessed.

During these trance-like experiences the deities may speak through the possessed person offering advice and guidance. While in this state, the devotees, often women, roll their eyes back, scream, shake their bodies, move haphazardly, and often bump into people or surrounding objects. To avoid injuries, the *babaloa*'s assistants follow them closely and, when necessary, restrain their awkward movements.

In various instances where I have seen individuals 'experiencing' the presence of an Orisha power, it appeared as if their entire beings are transformed. I have witnessed female devotees emitting guttural sounds outside the human vocal range, and ancient, little 100-pound women lifting up male bystanders twice their weight and carrying them around for several seconds. These intense seances are brought to an end by the slowing down of the music, by specific 'dismissal' chants, and by the intervention of the *babaloa*. Exhausted by the physical and emotional requirements of the spiritual 'possession', these individuals are usually accompanied to a bench, sprinkled with fresh water, massaged with ointments, and allowed to recover.

In this occasion, the presence of the Orisha powers last for only a short time and soon all the participants are on their feet chatting idly. While the assistants are heating up the food, participants are offered fruits including pineapples, oranges, sugar canes, starfruits, and mangos. I decide to wander in the front yard where there are a number of little temples (stools) dedicated to different Orishas.

Most of them include a small bamboo or stone hut open on one side and covered with palm-tree fronds. In the stools are lit lanterns and other religious paraphernalia specific to each deity. God Shango's temple is marked by a sword planted in the ground, while Ogun's includes various metal tools such as knives, pliers, a cutlass, and a pair of scissors. Eshu's, located at the entrance, has the large stone slab I touched when I arrived at the yard, and goddess Yemaja's, the Orisha of the waters, has an oar and a bowl of water. Unlike most of the other Orisha yards I have visited, there are no Orisha flags planted here and no candles are used.

Just past 11 p.m., we are served a plate of food with rice, vegetables and some kind of soy patties covered with a spicy sauce. After the meal, the *babaloa* asks a couple of men to walk me down the hill and make sure I catch a maxi-taxi home safely. On the way we pass by the enormous mansion of the Mighty Sparrow, the local calypsonian hero, whose pretentious villa stands out ridiculously in this humble neighborhood of small tin-roofed houses.

Africans and Indians in Trinidad are conceptualizing new identities that are based on both a knowledge of their ancestral past and a response to surrounding conditions. This process of mediation is conducted in a very conscious manner and traditional elements not desirable any longer are purposely left out. Indians for example, do not express any interest in reviving caste-based occupational groups, nor do Africans contemplate the institution of female circumcision.

These new identities, furthermore, are not created in absolute terms, but rather in opposition to nearby others. Consequently, 'Indian-ness' and 'African-ness' are often defined through symbols and practices drawn from a very specific mythological past or religious corpus as well as from stereotypes (Baksh, 1979; Moore, 1995). Both my Indian and African informants were very quick in enumerating a number of oppositions differentiating the ethos of their respective communities. Some of these dichotomies included the same elements Klass listed in his analysis of the Indian society (1961). Among them are (with 'Indian-ness' first) stinginess vs. consumption; shyness vs. aggression; Rama-Sita (good) vs. *Rawan* (evil); pure foods vs. unclean meats; family vs. self; structure (religious festivals) vs. anti-structure (Carnival); DLP/UNC vs. PNM, and so on.

PROCESSES OF SPACE MANIPULATION

The trend toward religious revitalization can be interpreted as a reaction to a forced spatial convergence particularly evident in urban centers. Here, individual mobility and opportunities have resulted in spatial closeness between people with very different interests. Responses often designed to counteract a potential for social assimilation include congregating in culturally exclusive locations where each group can celebrate its identity. This is occasionally expressed as a form of antagonistic power capable of drawing

clear lines between 'us' and 'them'. Through claims of retention of elements from the mother country, the sacredness of these spaces and practices is validated and political messages voiced to the larger society. This section presents Trinidadian cases where physical places have been turned into cultural nodes via religious practices.

The physical and geographic dimension, like the temporal one, is a fundamental component of all human activities and as such, permeates social action. Although it can be quantified through universally recognized criteria of measurement, in its role as a mediator of practices, space is less easily definable. The intricacy involved in its definition arises from the presence of historical elements embedded in its physical dimension. It is these historical elements that function as catalysts for the transformation of purely physical places into complex cultural nodes.

Depending upon the scale in which they are operating, cultural nodes can be whole and broken, global and fractured at the same time. They exist universally as well as at levels of regions, states, city and neighborhoods. They manifest themselves in terms of urban and architectural design, and/or through the political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Cultural nodes have a multi-valence of meanings with transformations across various spatial scales, social spheres, and through the lenses of different disciplines. Following are instances where the structure of few Trinidadian spaces is

broken down at various levels of abstraction to expose some of the threads unique to the fabric of this society.

Born from the belly of cargo ships carrying African slaves and indentured Indians, Trinidad presents a degree of heterogeneity matched in the Caribbean region by only a few other countries. For centuries people of different descents have contributed to an unusual range of traditions, which has more or less regularly spilled out of artificially created boundaries. Popular notions, for example, have often conceptualized lines marking the urban vs. rural dichotomy. A great distance is perceived between these lines, which also define another dichotomy, intrinsic within the former one: that of the African vs. the Indian. The latter have been historically associated with the countryside and, although today's Indians are increasingly urban, they continue to maintain extensive ties with their rural community of origin. On the contrary, a large part of the African population moved to the cities soon after emancipation and today's Africans rarely have an interest in visiting the rural areas.

Another conceptualization of space in Trinidad is based on the dichotomy between Trinidad and its twin island Tobago. Africans from the main island of Trinidad view Tobagonians (who are almost exclusively of African descent) as being country bumpkins and backward like the Indian rural residents of Trinidad. Africans from Trinidad travel to little Tobago only as

tourists, and usually lodge with foreign visitors in the fancy hotels grouped at the western end near the airport.

This perception about African Tobagonians suggests that some cultural categorizations are not necessarily based on an African vs. Indian dichotomy, but rather on an urban vs. rural one, independent of ethnicity. Part of the relevance of the urban vs. rural discourse is based on a gap between the high degree of modernization of the Trinidadian cities and the isolation of some truly remote rural areas on both islands. The consequences of these long-lasting physical as well as cultural cleavages have been recorded throughout the nation's history and in many ways continue to affect today's wider perceptions (Miller, 1994; Ryan ed., 1991; Vertovec, 1992; Yelvington, 1995).

At the community level, while barracks, huts on stilts, government housing projects, or picket-fenced houses have suggested images of specific lifestyles and ethnic affiliations, a complex cultural web has softened the contours between different Trinidadian realities. Through time, as the old property lines of large sugar plantations have blurred into the present mesh of city streets and avenues, each local collectivity has been forced to interact with one another. Nowadays, Port-of-Spain is a densely populated and relatively heterogeneous center whose recent urban blending has favored the fading of both caste lines and a rigid class structure. This trend has imposed a physical closeness among individuals very different from one another. People have occasionally reacted to this forced proximity by manifesting a desire for

more distant personal contacts. This social aloofness counteracting the homogenizing forces of urbanism is visible in the evolution of more ramified and formal frameworks of social relations, as well as in divisive patterns of space management.

While at one level we may find a relatively mixed geographical area, at another level we witness the existence of a mosaic of cultural nodes characterized by abrupt transitions between one another. In these nodes the coalescence of beliefs, sounds, smells, and images arouse a sense of belonging, and the familiarity experienced by the individual or the group manifests an identity that is often defined against that of others. Here, practices and ideologies are grafted to specific physical spaces, which become the cores of unique social niches. Once a cultural node is created, the historical elements that contributed to its transformation become inherent in the location itself. Traits highly symbolic for a specific identity are selected for their dissociating function and groups' practices may involve acts openly antagonistic towards outsiders.

In the busy capital city of Port-of-Spain a wide array of activities defines daily the local space use and distribution. In the processes of ethnic, political, and religious mingling or lack of it, some spaces have acquired particular relevance. Sections of the city, or specific locations within it, are attributed unique significance or even sacredness, and only individuals sharing similar status and world-views enter them. These spaces come to embody historical

memories and act as substantial sites for identity definition. In the same way that chronological divisions are used to refer to a specific social formation, similarly these culturally loaded spaces become referents to unique histories. The natural and the cultural are indissolubly unified in the production of a manifold type of space.

Adopting Roger's 1995 models of multi-ethnic metropolis, my analysis of Port-of-Spain suggests that this community has moved within the last century from the 'divided city' template (based on the maintenance of violently defended encampments of homogeneous neighborhoods) to a more pluralistic template. However, while the 'multicultural (or post-modernist) city' is interpreted as a case of state-managed, top-down multi-vocality, the 'city of difference' relies on the presence of a street-level control by the populace of both public spaces and political action. This latter case describes the Trinidadian capital where the public domain is used, for example during mass celebrations, as a bridge between potentially hermetically sealed ethnic territories. This alternative space, therefore, recognizes local cultural differences while still providing an opportunity for communal coalition-building processes.

Trinidadian Cultural Nodes

Throughout the world, sacred locations and symbolic sites have been created through specific rituals of intentional transformation. Here, the performance of appropriate practices and the use of symbolic implements modify natural spaces into cultural domains. According to Turner: "A transformative ritual is comprised of a stereotyped sequence of activities such as gestures and words performed in a sequestered place, and is designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests" (1973:110).

The transformative processes I witnessed during my fieldwork entailed speeches, setting flags, approaching the space after fasting and purification rituals, praying, chanting and playing selected music, as well as offering gifts such as sweets, fruit, flowers, candles, olive oil, and rum. Enactments, singing, or spoken acts were used to narrate a story recounting a certain past, an ideal, or the details of an identity to be experienced in daily life.

Based on historical elements and religious traditions, some practices such as Kwanzaa have been invented, while others such as three-day bamboo Hindu weddings have been re-discovered to satisfy the need for identity-maintenance within the African and Hindu communities respectively. These practices not only authenticate the past but also transmit the ethos of a community fully immersed in the current context. During this process of

mediation between the old and new, intricate dynamics evolve between memory, artistic preferences, and change. Tensions can develop between authoritative attempts to perpetuate a master narrative and each community's need to reshape that narrative in a form that elicits ideological support for today's actors.

In Trinidad, the issue of stylistic purity has been a salient concern for both Africans and Indians. A debate on the degree to which innovation and incorporation of outside influences are acceptable, confirms the great responsibility local leaders feel toward the preservation of their traditions. More conservative views (often ideologically predominant) tend to give a legitimacy to cultural vestiges of the ancestral past that syncretic products are rarely accorded. This ongoing controversy speaks of the socio-political element characterizing religious spaces as well as practices.

Cultural nodes may possess different degrees of sanctity. The Islamic *masjeed* along Western Main Road in St. James is a permanent sacred site. Among the physical elements contributing to its sacredness are: its orientation toward the city of Mecca, its green and white colors typical of the Indian Islamic sub-continent, and its high windows keeping the curious gaze of outsiders out and Muslim devotees focused in. By contrast, only a temporary sacredness is attributed to the Muslim *tadjah*-yards (see previous chapter) or to the small floor surface occupied by the bass drums resting between practices before *Hosay*. Here, drummers avoid touching the ground when

passing the heavy instrument to each other, and use a square piece of carpet or cardboard to mark the sacred ground when the drums are finally put down.

An example of spatial transformation among the Hindu community is the Sadhu *mandir*, generally known as the Temple in the Sea. In the mid-20th century the British colonial authority destroyed a temple built by Siewdass Sadhu, a pious Hindu devout. He then decided to build another temple, this time 500' into the sea of the Gulf of Paria, where the British could not claim land ownership.

For years, day after day he committed himself to the incredible feat of carrying on his bicycle a building stone at the time. A symbol of religious dedication and political struggle against foreign occupation, the hand-constructed Temple in the Sea became a proof of Indians' willingness to preserve their ancestral beliefs in the face of all adversities.

After Siewdass Sadhu's death in the 1960's the Temple quickly deteriorated until, in 1995, the 150th Anniversary of Indian Arrival to Trinidad prompted a re-appreciation of the structure. Ironically it was the 'new' PNM government that took responsibility for the rebuilding of the Temple hoping to woo Indians' support. Today the Temple has regained reverence within its own community and has become the site for Hindu religious pilgrimages. Here, present generations learn about Indian past resistance to British colonialism while finding inspiration in the struggle to conquer their own space in independent Trinidad.

Another case of transformation among Hindus is the 'holification' of the river Marion in Blanchisseuse, northeast Trinidad (Figure 34). In 1996, *Swamis* (wise religious men) from the motherland consecrated the river with samples of sacred water and dust collected from about 2,000 pilgrimage sites in India. In a solemn ceremony, the symbolic elements were partly dispersed in the Marion waters and partly stored in a time capsule buried at the junction of two sections of the river, under a little tongue of land.

The Trinidadian river was re-named Gangadhara and, by injecting the sacredness of Indian rivers, was transformed into a holy site. Consequently this local stream became a spiritual bridge making it possible for the average Trinidadian unable to visit the ancestral land, to overcome the geographical distance of the mother country.

Today, Gangadhara is the location for a variety of religious events including the *Ganga Aarti* (the sailing of the lighted *deyas*), gods' and goddesses' birthdays, funerals, and *Mundan Sanskars* among others. Furthermore, the landmark indicating the exact place where the time capsule is buried is the point where devotees offer prayers and donations to the river Ganga.

Dragged early out of bed by my singer friend Indira, I attend the last day of *Kartik Snaan*, which celebrates the end *Kartik* or the 'month of darkness'. During this month, and especially at full moon, Hindus flock along this river and throughout the coast for ceremonial baths and other purification rituals.

As part of the event, people camp along the banks for days and share a variety of religious and communal activities. On Sunday, and after an action-packed day including *pujas*, planting of flags, chanting *bhajan* music, praying, and socializing, the closing ceremony consists of a number of rituals focusing on the river goddess Ganga and the time capsule landmark. Walking upriver from a base-camp, a woman is given the honor of carrying on her head a *murti* (statue) of the goddess and the entire congregation follows her, wading in the river while chanting *mantras* (sacred Hindu formulas).

The procession stops briefly to read passages from the sacred book *Ramayan* and to offer donations at a quaint natural grotto where lord Shiva's *lingam* is displayed³. It then continues further up to the edge of a deep water hole where the leader of the congregation prepares the goddess for her final destination. Two men, already swimming in deep waters, accept the sacred statue and carry it upriver. People from the procession continue to chant while some climb on the banks to follow the course of the *murti*. Everybody throws flowers to the *murti* passing by and the waters soon turn into a stream of colorful petals. The two men swim to the deepest section of the river and let

³ A *puja* for the goddess of the sacred waters, Ganga is always held with a *puja* for lord Shiva. The two gods are usually celebrated together because the tradition narrates that after a long drought people prayed for Ganga to descend to earth and bring water. She came, but they soon realized that her flow was too powerful and would have destroyed everything. People prayed again asking for help and Shiva came to receive the dangerous water flow in his matted locks of hair. This distributed gently the waters to all corners of the earth and brought prosperity and purity.

the *murti* sink to the bottom; goddess Ganga, after spending days among her devoted humans, returns to her abode.

After the two men swim back, another man is sent even further upstream dragging a copper tray with three burning *deyas*. He reaches the landmark where the time capsule is buried and performs an *aarti* ritual. He too comes back and joins the procession, which stayed at the edge of the shallow section and watched from a distance. Before walking back, the group leader points out that if they collect enough money, next year the congregation will buy a little boat so that everybody will be able to reach the landmark rather than having to watch from afar.

King George V Park is a case in which a secular area has been transformed to a sacred African Orisha space. Located in the heart of Port-of-Spain not too far from the grounds of the Queen's Park Savannah, the Park is a daily destination for joggers and soccer amateurs. Since in 1988 when the *Ooni* (Nigerian 'Holy King') of Ife and father of the Yoruba Nation paid a visit to these grounds, the Park has become a cultural node for the Orisha community. In that occasion, the *Ooni* (the highest figure in the religious hierarchy of the Orisha order), and his wife, their personal suite, and another dozen of West African tribal chiefs acted as guests of honor during the 150th anniversary of the local Emancipation Day commemorations.

At the Park, the *Ooni* and his delegation performed an elaborated series of rituals, which turned this secular environment into a sacred site. The *Ooni* also appointed two local religious practitioners as leaders of the Trinidadian Orisha body and expressed his wish for an ongoing contact between the African continent and this diasporic center. After the 1988 official visit, the *Ooni's* emissaries have occasionally returned to Trinidad, contributing to a more public profile of the local Orisha community.

Since then, the 12th of June has been officially recognized as Orisha Day and it has been honored with a cultural fair including concerts, dance performances, lectures, children's activities, and the sale of traditional African handicrafts. Orisha Day events, however, are only marginally attended, and the still limited exposure of this religious body attracts a sparse and very selected crowd. Although King George V Park is located nearby the mixed neighborhood of St. James, participants belong mainly to a restricted segment of the population. At the time of my observations, only Africans from the lower class are attending to the festivities or browsing around the stalls.

The town of Diego Martin, a suburb of Port-of-Spain, not only boasts being the home of the first calypsonian, but it also houses one of the few *tambour- bamboo* bands still in existence. Today, in a back-yard of a poor section of town, one of the most famous *tambour-bamboo* group practices for its annual Emancipation Day performance. Among the musicians, a few older

members still sing in *Patois* and the content of several of the lyrics relates to African Orisha practices (Figure 35).

The yard is not far from the main road, but this space is not open to everybody. I gain the privilege to witness a rehearsal through an African friend and government employee residing in Diego Martin. Both the musicians and the audience are drawn exclusively from the lower-class segment of the African community who perceive this space as sacred. Before entering it, some of the participants bend and touch the dirt floor with their right hand to salute Orisha gods.

Tambour-bamboo music is also attributed a deep political significance for its role in resisting the establishment and affirming African artistic merits. Used as an alternative instrument after the British silenced the use of drums in the late 19th century, *tambour-bamboo* dominated the streets for the following 50 years, until steeldrums took over. Today, it is still considered by many one of the few truly African expressions not tainted by commercial forces.

The Transformative Power of Processions

Processions are important tools for power display and territorial demarcation. The processional component of the Trinidadian Carnival, for example, has assumed a variety of political meanings at different historical moments. A detailed analysis of Carnival's role as a pagan celebration,

memorial procession, revitalization ritual, street appropriation, and protest march has been presented in chapter eight dedicated entirely to this event.

Although spirituality is often a major element behind sacred processions, a strong political function can be present as well. Among the Indian community, the local temple *Hindu Prachar Kendra* conducted, a decade ago, an important process of space appropriation. The *pradakshana*, or the circumambulating of a sacred object, has origins in the Indian sub-continent (Meighoo and Narinesingh, 1996). In 1987, a *pradakshana* of the duration of more than a week was carried out around the entire island of Trinidad (Figure 36). Delimited by the path of a relayed torch symbolically representing the sacred fire of a *deya*, Trinidad was imbued with religious symbolism and appropriated.

The spiritual goal of this ritual was to give Trinidad the same sacredness to which Mother India is attributed. In addition, Hindus' sanctification of the island was a powerful stance of the Indian community politically claiming Trinidad as its own country. Denied to the Indians for centuries by African insiders, the symbolic ownership of the country by the Indians acquired a political dimension even more evident considering the timing of this ceremony. In 1987, the African based PNM government lost the national elections, and a multi-ethnic coalition supported by the Indian electorate finally ascended to power.

The yearly parading of the Muslim *tadjahs* along the streets of St. James is also a form of empowerment. This sacred procession functions as a catalyst for the re-definition of a physical space by Islamic devotees who, by marching in the streets of what was once a sugar plantation (a strong Indian symbol), re-inscribe it with holiness. Through the writing of the name of *Allah* in this public domain the *Shi'ite* spiritual fulcrum reclaims the lay community and transforms a historically relevant cultural landmark into a moral space. By parading beautiful works of religious Islamic art informants mention experiencing not only pride in the artistic symbols of their thousand years-old tradition, but also virtue for publicly expressing religious devotion.

Similarly to the Hindu *pradakshana* described above, Muslims emphasized the deep significance the procession has in turning the entire country of Trinidad into a sacred place. Although brought to the periphery of the Islamic world by unfavorable economic forces, this way the descendants of Muslim indentured laborers can claim privileges in their adopted country. Through a rewriting of the topography of Islam, they link the distant diasporic Trinidad to the Islamic center of the sacred Kaaba.

The maintenance of an Indian identity for local Muslims, in fact, presents a complexity that their Hindu counterparts do not experience. The partition of India into the separate Islamic State of Pakistan had a considerable effect of the psyche of the local Muslim community. Most continue to relate to the undivided India their ancestors left. Others rely on the fact that the

concept of diaspora is not recognized by all sections of the Islamic leadership and assert that the *umma* (Islamic community) holds no national boundaries. Some Muslims, however, are experiencing a weakened identification with Hindu India and consequently struggle between conflicting feelings of loyalties.

Today the *Hosay* procession is granted government funds, but in the past it was the contributions of wealthy Muslim families and the time of working-class individuals that made this religious commemoration possible. Through *Hosay*, the entire community has been asserting a right to publicly celebrate its minority status, and participants have affirmed their equal rights in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Furthermore, the entrance of the *Hosay* parade even into other sections of Port-of-Spain allows Muslims to inscribe the cityscapes with new meanings that translate alien and historically different areas into familiar and acceptable spaces. Through its transformative dimension, *Hosay* temporarily connects the separate and distant.

By opening up to an outside audience witnessing the magnificence of the *tadjahs* and moving to the captivating *tassa* drumming, the *Shi'ite* community reaffirms a moral privilege to spread its religious message from the formerly Indian core of St. James into surrounding environments. It also allows to merge the sacred element of the funeral procession with the profane element of the streets, therefore fostering a sense of community that brings insiders and outsiders into a single civic body.

The attendance by local public figures further dignifies the procession, which has become an opportunity to invent a shared institutional space where common values can be mediated. Although occasionally fostering interests not always respectful of the cultural and religious purpose of the original event, an increasing number of non-Muslim politicians and businessmen works with the community to facilitate the organization of the festival.

This chapter has suggested that Trinidadian society is characterized by the presence of cultural nodes functioning as mechanisms for segregation against non-members. These foci not only manifest unique notions of identity but also reflect potential hostility and incompatibility between social segments. At the same time, however, my research has also indicated that artistic and sacred celebrations in Trinidad can be very inclusive public affairs. On these occasions, mass practices and the spaces in which they take place can provide contexts fostering fellowship and togetherness between peoples otherwise not drawn to one another.

CHAPTER XI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

DISCUSSION

On Ethnicity

One of the challenges of today's ethnography is to give a fair representation of the cultural multiplicity encountered during fieldwork. Here a 'grand narrative' is replaced with the conversation of a more disparate group of voices, which in turn enters a discursive relation with the social scientist recording their stories. Throughout the body of this work, utterances and practices by African and Indian residents of Trinidad have been presented in an effort to explore the dynamics involved in the politicization of public religious expressions and artistic forms. Furthermore, on these multi-layered social stages, an allegedly 'neutral' state also implements programs articulated around the strengthening of an inclusive citizenry.

In Trinidad, state-sponsored celebrations, sacred practices, the complexity of Carnival, insulting calypso lyrics, the controversy over hybridization, and so on point to the pervasiveness of the debate on ethnic and national identity. *Douglas*, dancers, and religious devotees participate in this identity-making process and, with very specific agendas in mind, they

shape images of a future consistent with their past. The dynamics imbedded in blending old cultural notions with new realities implicate a complex nexus between the ethnic historical and practical dimensions.

Differences between Africans and Indians find their origins in the past and, to this day, function as pivotal axioms through which people comprehend the world. In this manner, the ideological repertoire available to the individual and the collectivity becomes instrumental to the construction of specific perceptions of the everyday environment. This fact partly explains the ubiquity of ethnic stereotypes frequently deployed by both Africans and Indians. In Trinidad, their ideological differences have been manifested in a variety of ways.

Throughout colonial times, the lower status non-white population registered its dissatisfaction with the imposed hierarchy through riots, protests, and insurrections, as well as religious rituals and public celebrations. For the elite these political statements were sometimes difficult to grasp, especially when expressed through apparently joyful contexts of festivals and street parades. When discernable by the elite, these coded forms of contestation were often seen as harboring paganism and violence and their menace as inversely related to the small space of the island.

By the 20th century the previously rejected African elements became a synecdoche for Creole. Principles of nationhood began to be personified by Creole notions, and in the local idiom, Creole came to correspond to 'native'.

This process partly justified the association some made between the ascendancy of a Creole-Trinidadian nationalism and the system of political *negritude* (Munasinghe, 1992).

The evolution of the Creole and Indian identities as structural exclusives implied that 'Indian-ness' was not recognized as 'native'. The local Indian community, therefore, faced the dilemma of either participating in national life upon undergoing a process of Creolization, or remaining marginal to the Trinidadian national milieu. Instead, it adopted a strategy of dissent against the African political stronghold and its ideological dominance over the general society. This struggle aimed to weaken the Afro-Creole hegemony and, after its recent collapse, to fill the void with the re-definition of a Trinidadian identity inclusive of the Indian one.

In spite of the opposition encountered by forcing its way into mainstream society, the Indian community has been taking a leading role in guiding Trinidad through this critical transition period. By pursuing an expansion devoid of outward confrontation and a growth through inward assimilation, Indians are not losing their ideological core but rather bringing their own Indo-centric ancestral traditions to the wider society (Sankeralli, 1995).

Compelled to pursue an acceptable type of assimilation, some segments of the Indian community are devoting much energy into defining loyalty and identity. This differentiation would allow individuals to maintain

their original identity and ethnic affiliation without necessarily implying an inability to adopt a national consciousness. Through this assertion Indians can legitimately validate their being both Indian and Trinidadian at the same time (Munasinghe, 1992).

This research confirms that the status of citizenship granted in Trinidad since 1962 has not yet fully replaced primary affiliations, and that institutional politics continues to be built around ethnic identity. The chaotic projections of making up individual and collective selves against a still evolving nationalism have unearthed contentious issues undermining congenial group relations.

Supporting an instrumentalist ethnic model my fieldwork observations pointed out a correlation between ethnicity and a political mobilization of convenience. However, the persistence of ethnicity beyond temporary allegiances suggested the need for an additional model better suited to move beyond this weakness. Adopting a situational perspective this work has emphasized the active role of the local social actors as well as their ability to modify identities and alliances as shifting needs and contexts require.

In contemporary Trinidad a rigid compartmentalization between the African and Indian communities in Trinidad is no longer conveyed and their relations have never been as explosive as in other multi-ethnic countries including neighboring Guyana. There, the nature of economic competition and a violent ethnic polarization have been fiercely undermining harmonious coexistence between groups (Premdas, 1997). Especially in polities belonging

to a category of ethnically bipolar states such as Guyana and Trinidad, perceptions of inequalities, corruption, despotism, and dishonest practices can actively encourage tensions between collectivities already alienated by a mutual antagonism rooted in cultural differences (Constant, 1997; Hintzen, 1989). Institutionalized inter-group rivalry and the maneuvering of ethnic loyalties for immediate political gain can further widen the chasm between groups. This context hampers the growth of nation-building sentiments, which in turn produces disruptive implications for the peaceful living of a differentiated population.

Engrossed in a whirling social as well as technological milieu, Trinidadians are manifesting an interest in the prevention and resolution of localized ethnic conflicts. Since the 1990's, the national economic standing has been improving and both Africans and Indians are increasingly sharing a cosmopolitan, urbanized existence with similar class concerns. Despite the reluctance of some community leaders to continue in this direction, many aspects of the lifestyle belonging to each group have filtered into the lifestyle of the other. These trends toward accommodation signal the presence of a multi-layered interaction between ethnicity and class and indicate that one specific social criterion no longer predominates.

Ethnic prejudices are being slowly replaced by more accurate perceptions of the 'other' and popularly conceived imageries of monolithic and homogenous communities are falling into disuse. Because national

identification is a learned behavior, it can be imparted through the articulation of notions and practices encompassing values of sensitization, understanding, and overall justice. In Trinidad, free education, shared national language, democratic representation, and participation in the economic system as wage earners and consumers are contributing to the development of common interests between Africans and Indians.

While globalization doesn't necessarily broaden the mind (Jenkins, 1997), the forces of modernization are supplying tools to fight misconception and to expedite a social re-assessment based on respect of ethnic and other differences. Although a unified national consciousness may never replace ethnic and religious identities, notions that are typical of a capitalistic system and a commodity market may achieve this end.

Despite the persistence for centuries of ethnic-based attitudes and selective interpretations, my fieldwork in Trinidad has identified the integrating function of modernity, mass communication, and consumerism as it alters artistic expressions and religious rituals. While both Africans and Indians have been actively involved in perpetuating their own cultural traditions, my data brought to light more than occasional syncretic practices. In fact, as both collectivities participate on equal ground in the overall life of the country, a more encompassing re-definition of what it is to be Trinidadian is fostering a projection of a new future. Here, ethnic selves and citizenship do not have to be mutually exclusive, and traditionally incongruent identities are becoming

compatible. If the crystallizing of an ethnic-based political praxis can lead to anarchy and internecine wars, then the building of a society where groups' cultural and economic needs are shared presents the most promising course in overcoming the harm of ethnic hegemony and discriminating nationalism.

On Ritual Practice

This research investigated the dynamics characterizing the manipulation of public events by different segments of the Trinidadian society. It documented the various cultural forms each collectivity brings to the public domain and how participants and onlookers affect patterns of interpretation. Influenced by their ethnic, religious, and cultural pasts both actors and audiences shape each event, which in turn allows for social lines to be drawn, negotiated, and re-defined.

Informal mechanisms of identity-building such as Carnival and other collective celebrations have provided fertile grounds for the display of the plasticity characterizing the local individual and collective action. For example, the simultaneous expression of patriotism and criticism of the state witnessed during this author's fieldwork suggests that apparent dichotomies do not represent conflictuality but rather complementarity. In fact, these oppositions foster a perpetual motion toward social definition, which Trinidadians of various persuasions employ to make an inventory of their selves. Public

events, therefore, function as demarcators of boundaries, weapons in the conflict over political and economic supremacy, and tools for reconciliation.

The plethora of celebrations discussed in the body of this work exposed the chaotic simultaneity of group accommodation and differentiation. Despite the fact that the general population participates in the national political life, it is through the politicization of public events that feelings of enmity and amity are mostly articulated. The result is that, both Africans and Indians, as well as the establishment, tamper with art and religion to create shared interfaces.

In particular Indians, in order to convey loyalty to Trinidad, have been recently promoting Indian cultural forms that attract non-Indian participants and that encompass a unique Trinidadian style. Among them are: the *Hosay* procession, *Divali* celebrations, *chutney* dancing and singing, and *tassa* drumming. These expressions are increasingly part of the national artistic milieu, while explicitly encoding a notion of 'native-ness' that merges a new 'composite' Indian and Trinidadian self. These artistic compromises represent options fulfilling the Indian community's desire to belong without relinquishing its cultural uniqueness.

Yet, Indian leaders also promulgate ideological purity and chastise the alleged 'vulgarization' of Indian art forms through Creolization processes. Orthodox Hindu associations often appeal to their community to abstain from the wickedness associated with Creole expressions such as Carnival, *bacchanal*, *feting*, and *wining*. This paradox of heralding and rejecting

Creolization at the same time has fraught with inconsistencies the Indian attempt at re-conceptualizing the historically dominant African notion of 'Trinidadian-ness'.

Acknowledging the power invested in apparently festive merrymakings and noting their repercussions on many spheres of society has not only added to the Trinidadian ethnographic record, but has hopefully improved our understanding of multi-ethnic communities. The recognition that both Africans and Indians conceptualize social identities through ritual practices legitimizes the political capacity of artistic and religious expressions. Although this political component may also foment old hatreds and attract confrontational responses, my attempt to grapple with the complexity involved in these expressions focuses on their role as frameworks where non-violent ethnic and nationalistic discourses evolve.

This author argues that public celebrations can be non-belligerent mechanisms opening informative channels and devising options in a context of relative reciprocal respect. Here public displays of traditions, identity-construction negotiations, and the symbolics of power are bound to improve communication between different peoples, and possibly sustain a lasting harmony. This potential for building bridges that can overcome isolation across and within groups may also usher sensitive policy-making strategies at both the local and global levels.

CONCLUSIONS

In his work on Mauritius, Eriksen suggested a number of factors contributing to inter-ethnic peace in that country that apply to Trinidad as well (1992). Those are: (1) The small size of the territory makes secession an impossible goal. Furthermore in Trinidad, the historic rural vs. urban ethnic segregation is weakening, and African and Indian groups are not spatially delineated enough to claim a firm territorial base. (2) The absence of a clear demographic majority hampers the formation of a powerful corporate group and in Trinidad both the Indian and African communities wield considerable power. (3) Although Africans argue that they have been brought to Trinidad first, both Africans and Indians are uprooted immigrants and neither group can claim exclusive right to the country. The nationalistic discourse, in fact, employs this shared past to encourage these communities to use their similar trauma as a basis for growth into a unified and encompassing citizenry.

On these grounds, it is reasonable to predict that the on-going deconstruction of the Afro-Creole matrix is being followed by the building of a more inclusive Trinidadian society. Armed with a will to de-legitimize the orthodox stand, some segments of the population are proposing new classifications based on less discriminating notions of belonging. I believe that survival in this thrusting world may require the willingness to experience one's identity as an intricate, at times contradictory and always unfinished process.

I contend that in the course towards these adaptations, the growing cultural and biological hybridization is fundamental in creating a Trinidadian national space grounded on principles of ethnic and cultural balance.

This fieldwork indicated that in Trinidad dissenting voices are already questioning the dominant vocabulary and that traditional images and structures are tumbling. Alternative concepts disrupting hegemonic ethnic, cultural, and gender notions are spreading outside an authoritative formula and a concrete societal reconfiguration is under way. These ideologies are slowly being translated into a type of political action favoring a more egalitarian social, political, and economic advancement for all.

This author hopes that the present research has underscored the multi-layered possibilities of ritual practice and the importance of cross-cultural analysis. This work has emphasized the complexity of the relationships between cultural representations and structures of power as they both alter the profile of an entire society. Furthermore, it has recognized the paradox that modernization and transnational movements feed contrary processes of homogenization and differentiation, globalization and localization.

The presence of these inherent contradictions hints to the need of conceptualizing the Trinidadian society in dialectical terms. Ongoing transformations at times in opposite directions suggest that there is an advantage in directing social investigation toward acknowledging the interplay of many crucial variables. This approach enables the understanding of society

as an expression of peoples' shifting practices and relations vis-à-vis complex surrounding pressures.

More importantly, it may be morally sound to identify options favoring notions and practices of reconciliation. In Trinidad, artistic syncretism, ideological fusion, a quest for equality, and a growing cross-cultural appreciation are signs that goodwill, mutual regard, and trust are realistic ends. Official institutions are increasingly promoting tolerant perspectives on inter-group relations while sustaining a national need for social cohesion. This trend is fueling a historical process leading toward greater inclusion even between historically separate groups. These changes informing present-day local politics are also signaling the strengthening of a new national consciousness able to thrive in the recognition of ethnic differences.

This monograph ends with some implication for future research. Artistic and religious practices as they relate to dynamics of group privilege, power distribution, and social identity-making have been discussed. Additional investigation could include the issue of class differentiation within both the African and Indian communities, and how these segments are experiencing the current political milieu. It would also be worthwhile to develop an in depth analysis of the changing socio-economic status of the local, growing *Douglas* population. Finally, multi-ethnic countries such as Guyana, Suriname, Mauritius, and Fiji would provide interesting material for a cross-cultural exploration on ethnicity and nationalism.

REFERENCES

- Ahye, M., (1991), 'Carnival, the Manipulative Polymorph: An Interplay of Social Stratification' in Ryan, S., (ed.), *Social and Occupation Stratification in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Anderson, B., (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Anthony, M., (1975), *Profile Trinidad: A Historical Survey from the Discovery to 1900*, London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Appadurai, A., (1990), 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Public Culture* 2 (2), 1-24.
- Bailey, F.G., (1969), *Stratagems and Spoils. A Social Anthropology of Politics*, New York: Schocken.
- Baksh, I., (1979), 'Stereotypes of Negroes and East Indians in Trinidad: A Re-Examination', *Caribbean Quarterly* 25 (1-2), 52-71.
- Barnes, B., (1988), *The Nature of Power*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Barth, F., (ed.), (1969), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Beckford, G.L., (1972), *Persistent Poverty*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Beckford, G.L., (1974), *Caribbean Economy: Dependency and Backwardness*, Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Bell, C., (1992), *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Best, L., (1968), 'A Model of Pure Plantation Economy', *Social and Economic Studies* 17 (3).
- Birth, K.K., (1993), *Any Time Is Trinidad Time; Time and Social Organization in Trinidad*, Ph.D. dissertation, San Diego: University of California.

- Bonacich, E., and Modell, J., (1980), *The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japan American Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, P., (1977), *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., (1984), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bourdieu, P., (1991), *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Braithwaite, L., (1960), 'Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism' in *Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean*, V. Rubin and D.L. Keur, (eds), New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Braithwaite, L., (1953/1975), *Social Stratification in Trinidad: A Preliminary Analysis*, Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Brereton, B., (1979), *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad, 1870-1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brereton, B., (1981), *A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783-1962*, London: Heinemann.
- Brereton, B., and Dookeran, W., (1982), (eds), *East Indians in the Caribbean*, London: Kraus.
- Burke, P., (1978), *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, London: Temple Smith.
- Cancian, F., (1965), *Economics and Prestige in a Maya Community*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Cancian, F., (1992), *The Decline of Community in Zinacantan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Caribbean Quarterly*, (1956), Trinidad Carnival Issue, 4 (3-4), Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Paria Publishing.
- Chelkowski, P.J., (ed.), (1979), *Ta'ziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran*, New York: New York University Press.

- Clarke, C.G., (1986), *East Indians in a West Indian Town: San Fernando, Trinidad, 1930-1970*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Clifford, J., and Marcus, G.E., (eds), (1986), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Clifford, J., (1988), *The Predicament of Culture: 20th Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, A., (ed.), (1974), *Urban Ethnicity*, London: Tavistock.
- Cohen, A., (1976), *Two-Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Societies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cohen, A., (1993), *Masquerade Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Constant, F., (1977), 'Citizenship, Ethnicity and Nation-Building: The Case of Trinidad and Guyana, in Carrion, J.M., (ed.), *Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality in the Caribbean*, San Juan: Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico.
- Craig, S.E., (1974), *Community Development in Trinidad and Tobago: 1943-1973*, Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Craig, S.E., (ed.), (1982), *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader*, Maracas, Trinidad: Susan Craig, 2.
- Crowley, D.J., (1996), *Carnival, Canbouley, and Calypso*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- DaMatta, R., (1991), *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- de Las Casas, B., (1474-1566), (1971), *Historia de las Indias*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Deosaran, R., (1987a), 'Some Issues in Multiculturalism: The Case of Trinidad and Tobago in the Post-Colonial Era', *Caribbean Quarterly* 33 (1-2), 61-80.

- Deosaran, R., (1987b), 'The Social Psychology of Cultural Pluralism: Updating the Old', *Plural Societies* 17(1), 54-77.
- Despres, L. A., (ed.), (1975), *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies*, Paris: Mouton.
- Durkheim, E., (1915), *The Elementary Forms of Life*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Durkheim, E., (1938/1958), *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York: The Free Press.
- Economist Intelligence Unit, (1999), *Country Profile: Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, 1999-2000*, London: EI Unit.
- Elder, J.D., (1973), *The Calypso and Its Morphology*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: National Cultural Council.
- Ericksen, T.H., (1992), *Us and Them in Modern Societies: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Mauritius, Trinidad, and Beyond*, London: Scandinavian University Press.
- Espinets, C.S., and Pitts, H., (1944), *Land of the Calypso: The Origin and Development of Trinidad's Folk Songs*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: B.W.I.
- Furnivall, J.S., (1944), *Netherlands India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Furnivall, J.S., (1948), *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and the Netherlands India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Geertz, C., (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.
- Giddens, A., (1984), *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Glazer, N., and Moynihan, D.P., (1970), *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish in New York City*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Glazer, N., and Moynihan, D.P., (1975), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Gluckman, M., (1954), *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa*, Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press.
- Goddard, G., (1991), *Forty Years in the Steelbands 1939-1979*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Karia.
- Gordon, M.M., (1964), *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gordon, M.M., (1975), 'Toward a General Theory of Racial and Ethnic Group Relations' in *Ethnicity, Theory and Experience*, N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan, (eds), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gordon, M.M., (1969/1978), *Human Nature, Class, and Ethnicity*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Greeley, A.M., (1974), *Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance*, New York: Wiley.
- Hacker, A., (1992), *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, New York: Ballantine Books.
- Harewood, J., (1971), 'Racial Discrimination in Employment in Trinidad and Tobago', *Social and Economic Studies* 20 (3), 267-293.
- Harewood, J., and Henry, R.M., (1985), *Inequality in Post-Colonial Society: Trinidad and Tobago 1956-1981*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Henry, R. M., (1989), 'Inequalities in Plural Societies: An Exploration', *Social and Economic Studies* 38 (2), 69-110.
- Henry, R.M., and Nurse, K., (1996), (Internal Publication), 'The Entertainment Sector of Trinidad and Tobago: Implementing an Export Strategy', Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago, Industry and Trade Division.
- Herskovits, M.J., (1937), *Life in a Haitian Valley*, New York: A.A. Knopf.
- Herskovits, M.J., and Herskovits, F.S., (1947), *Trinidad Village*, New York: A.A. Knopf.

- Herskovits, M.J., (1959), *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Hill, E., (1972), *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hintzen, P.C., (1989), *The Costs of Regime Survival; Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawn, E.J., and Ranger, T.O., (eds), (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E.J., (1990), *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, and Reality*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Horowitz, D.L., (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Institute of Social and Economic Research, (1984), *The Social and Economic Impact of Carnival*, seminar held at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, on November 24-26, 1983.
- Institute of Social and Economic Research, (1997), 'Statistics on Music Preferences', *Trinidad Guardian*, September 22nd.
- Jameson, F., (1981), *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Jenkins, R., (1997), *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, London: Sage.
- Karran, K., (1996), 'Trinidad and Tobago's *Parang*, Calypso and *Chutney*', *Indo Caribbean Review* 3 (1), 47-65.
- Kertzer, D.I., (1988), *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Kiely, R., (1996), *The Politics of Labour and Development in Trinidad, Cave Hill*, Barbados: University of the West Indies Press.
- Kivisto, P., (1995), *Americans All*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

- Klass, M., (1961), *East Indians in Trinidad*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Klass, M., (1991), *Singing with Sai Baba: The Politics of Revitalization in Trinidad and Tobago*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Korom, F.J., and Chelkowski, P.J., (1994), 'Community Process and the Performance of *Muharram* Observances in Trinidad', *Drama Review* 38 (2), 150-175.
- Kuper, L., and Smith, M.G., (1969), *Pluralism in Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- La Guerre, J.G., (ed.), (1974/1985), *Calcutta to Caroni: The East Indians of Trinidad*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- La Guerre, J.G., (1982), *Social and Political Thought of the Colonial Intelligentsia*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Lee, A., (1991), 'Class, Race, Color and the Trinidad Carnival' in Ryan, S., (ed.), *Social and Occupation Stratification in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Lewis, W. A., (1982), *Perspective on Economic Development: Essays in Honour of W. A. Lewis*, T.A., Barker, A.S. Downes, and J.A. Sackey, (eds), Cave Hill, Barbados: University of the West Indies Press.
- Lieber, M., (1981), *Street Life. Afro-American Culture in Urban Trinidad*, Boston: G.K. Hall & Co.
- Liverpool, H., (1986), *Kaiso and Society*, St. Thomas: Virgin Island Commission on Youth.
- Malinovski, B., (1925), 'Magic, Science, and Religion' in Needham, J.A., (ed.), *Science, Religion, and Reality*, London: Sheldon Press.
- Manning, F.E., (1983), *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance*, Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press.

- Marcus, G.E., and Fisher, M.M.J., (1986), *Anthropology as a Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Mason, P., (1998), *Bacchanal! The Carnival Culture of Trinidad*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Meighoo K., and Narinesigh V., (1996), 'Negotiating Space: Hindu Pilgrimage in Trinidad', paper presented at the Workshop on African, Indian, and Indigenous Religions of the Caribbean, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- Miller, D., (1994), *Modernity; a Ethnographic Approach to Dualism and Mass Consumption in Trinidad*, Oxford: Berg.
- Mishener, F.O., (1958), *A Shango Religious Group and the Problem of Prestige in Trinidadian Society*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbus: Ohio State University.
- Mintz, S. W., (1959), 'The Plantation as a Socio-Cultural Type' in *Plantation Systems of the New World*, Social Science Monograph 7, Washington, DC: Pan American Union.
- Mintz, S.W., (1971), 'The Caribbean as a Socio-Cultural Area' in *Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean*, M.M. Horowitz and T.G. Mathews (eds), Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press.
- Mintz, S.W., (1974/1984) *Caribbean Transformations*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, D., (1995), *Racial Ideology in Trinidad: the Black View of the East Indian*, Tunapuna, Trinidad: Chakra Publishing House.
- Moore, S.F., and Meyerhoff, B., (1977), *Secular Ritual*, Amsterdam: Van Gorcum.
- Munasinghe, V., (1993), *Calaloo or Tossed Salad: National Identity in Trinidad*, Ph.D. dissertation, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University.
- Myrdal, G., (1944), *An American Dilemma*, New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Nagel, J., (1994), 'Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture', *Social Problems* 41 (1), 152-176.

- Nakashima, C.L., (1992), 'An Invisible Monster: The Creation and Denial of Mixed-Race People in America', in Root, M.P.P., (ed.), *Racially Mixed People in America*, London: Sage.
- Nash, M., (1989), *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Neil, A.A., (1987), *Voices from the Hills: Despers and Laventille: The Steelband and Its Effect on Poverty, Stigma, and Violence in a Community*, Trinidad: Cosmic Books Services Ltd.
- Nevadomsky, J., (1980), 'Changes in Hindu Institutions in an Alien Environment', *The Eastern Anthropologist* 33 (1), 39-53.
- Nevadomsky, J., (1983), 'Changing Patterns of Marriage, Family, and Kinship among the East Indians of Rural Trinidad', *Anthropos* 78 (1-2), 107-148.
- Newman, W.M., (1973), *American Pluralism: A Study of Minority Groups and Social Theory*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Niehoff, A., and Niehoff, J., (1960), *East Indians in the West Indies*, Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Museum Publications in Anthropology, 6.
- Novak, M., (1971), *The Rise of Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the 70's*, New York: Macmillan.
- Nunley, J.W., and Bettelheim, J., (1988), *Caribbean Festival Arts: Each and Every Bit of Difference*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Oostindie, G., (ed.), (1996), *Ethnicity in the Caribbean: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoetink*, London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Oxaal, I., (1982), *Black Intellectuals and the Dilemma of Race and Class in Trinidad*, Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company.
- Park, R.E., (1949), *Race and Culture*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Pearse, A., (1956), 'Carnival in Nineteenth-Century Trinidad', *Caribbean Quarterly* 4, 175-193.

- Plattner, S., (ed.), (1989), *Economic Anthropology*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Powrie, B.A., (1956), 'The Changing Attitude of the Colored Middle Class toward Carnival', *Caribbean Quarterly* 4 (3-4), 224-232.
- Premdas, R.R., (1993), *The Enigma of Ethnicity*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: School of Continuing Studies.
- Premdas, R. R., (1995), 'Ethnic Domination and Reconciliation in Multi-Ethnic Societies: A Re-consideration and an Alternative to J. Furnivall and M.G. Smith', *Caribbean Quarterly* 41 (1), 76-86.
- Premdas, R.R., (1997), 'Ethnic Conflict and Levels of Identity in the Caribbean: Deconstructing a Myth' in Carrion, J.M., (ed.), *Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality in the Caribbean*, San Juan: Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico.
- Puri, S., (1995), 'Race, Rape and Representation: Indo-Caribbean Women and Cultural Nationalism', paper presented at the NCIC-ISER Conference on the Indian Diaspora. St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., (1952), *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, London: Cohen and West.
- Ratimaya, B., (1995), *Festivals, Rituals, and Ethnicity*, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbus: Ohio State University.
- Reddock, R., (1994), 'Contestations over National Culture in Trinidad and Tobago: Considerations of Ethnicity, Class and Gender' (personal collection).
- Robben, A.C.G.M., (1989), *Sons of the Sea Goddess: Economic Practice and Discursive Conflict in Brazil*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rodman, H., (1971), *Lower-Class Families: the Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rogers, A., and Vertovec, S., (eds), (1995), *The Urban Context: Ethnicity, Social Networks and Situational Analysis*, Oxford: Berg.

- Rohlehr, G., (1990), *Calypso and Society in Pre-Independent Trinidad*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Gordon Rohlehr.
- Royce-Peterson, A., (1982), *Ethnic Identity: Stratification of Diversity*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rubin, V., (ed.), (1960), 'Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean' in *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Ryan, S., (1972), *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ryan, S., (ed.), (1988), *The Trinidad Experience: 1962-1987*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Ryan, S., (ed.), (1991), *Social and Occupation Stratification in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Ryan, S., (1995), 'Communalism vs. Cosmopolitanism: Indian Responses to Trinidadian National Politics', paper presented at the NCIC-ISER Conference on the Indian Diaspora, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- Ryan, S., (1996), *Pathways to Power: Indians and the Politics of National Unity in Trinidad and Tobago*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- Sachs, C., (1933), *World History of Dance*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Said, E., (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Sankarelli, B., (1995), 'Indians in a Creole Caribbean: The Case of Trinidad', paper presented at the NCIC-ISER Conference on the Indian Diaspora, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- Schneider, D.M., (1968), *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Scott, W.T., (1990), *The Possibility of Communication*, New York: Mouton.

- Shils, E., and Parsons, T., (eds), (1957), *Toward a General Theory of Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Shils, E., (1981), *Tradition*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Singh, K., (1988), *The Bloodstained Tombs: The Murrahm Massacre in Trinidad, 1884*, London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Singh, K., (1994), *Race and Class Struggles in a Colonial State: Trinidad 1917-1945*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press.
- Slyomovics, S., (1995), 'New York City's Muslim World Day Parade' in van der Veer, P., (ed.), *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Smith, A.D., (1981), *Ethnic Revival*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, A.D., (1994), 'The Problem of National Identity: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, 375-399.
- Smith M.G., (1960), 'Social and Cultural Pluralism' in *Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean*, V. Rubin and D.L. Keur (eds), New York, NY: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Smith, M.G., (1965), *The Plural Society in the British West Indies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Smith, M.G., (1974), *Corporations and Society*, London: Duckworth.
- Smith, M.G., (1984), *Culture, Race, and Class in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies.
- Smith, M.G., (1991), *Pluralism, Politics, and Ideology in the Creole Caribbean*, New York: Research Institute for the Research of Man.
- Smith, R.T., (1976), 'Race, Class and Conflict in a Post-Colonial Society' in Neumann, S. G., (ed.), *Small States and Segmented Societies*, New York: Praeger.
- Smith, R.T., (1988), *Kinship and Class in the West Indies; a Genealogical Study in Jamaica and Guyana*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Stewart, J.O., (1986), 'Patronage and Control in the Trinidadian Carnival' in *The Anthropology of Experience*, V.W. Turner and E.M. Bruner, (eds), Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Stuempfle, S., (1990), *The Steelband Movement in Trinidad and Tobago: Music, Politics and National Identity*, Ph.D. dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Stuempfle, S., (1995), *The Steelband Movement: The Forging of a National Art in Trinidad and Tobago*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- TIDCO, (1997), *Trinidad Statistics*, (Internal Publication), Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago, Statistics Division.
- Tinker, H., (1974), *A New System of Slavery: the Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830-1920*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trinidad Express Newspapers Limited*, (1990), *Daily Express, Trinidad Under Siege. The Muslimeen Uprising, 6 Days of Terror*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: *Trinidad Express Newspaper Limited*.
- Trinidad Express*, (1997), 'African Mastana Queen not an Issue' (personal collection).
- Trinidad Guardian*, March 5th (1990), 'Canadian Exodus of Indo-Trinidadians'.
- Trinidad Guardian*, June 17th (1997a), 'Orisha Members may soon get Marriage Licences'.
- Trinidad Guardian*, August 7th, (1997b), 'Boos were Panday's fault, says PNM'.
- Trinidad Guardian*, August 8th, (1997c), '2 Senators Condemn Booing'.
- Trotman, D.V., (1991), 'The Image of Indians in Calypso: 1946-1986' in Ryan, S., (ed.), *Social and Occupation Stratification in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Turner, V.W., (1967), *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of the Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Turner, V.W., (1969), *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago: Aldine.
- Turner, V.W., (1974), *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V.W. ed., (1982), *Celebration; Studies in Festivity and Ritual*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Van den Berghe, P.L., (1978), *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective*, New York: Wiley.
- Van den Berghe, P.L., (1981), *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, New York: Elsevier Press.
- Van Koningsbruggen, P., (1997), *Trinidad Carnival: A Question of National Identity*, London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Vertovec, S., (1992), *Hindu Trinidad: Religion, Ethnicity, and Socio-Economic Change*, London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Vertovec, S., and Rogers, A., (eds), (1995), *Urban Context: Ethnicity, Social Network, and Situational Analysis*, Washington, DC: Berg.
- Wagner, R., (1981), *The Invention of Culture*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Wallace, A.F.C., (1956), 'Revitalization Movements', *American Anthropologist* 58, 264-281.
- Wallerstein, E.I., (1974), *Modern World Systems: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of European World-Economy in the 16th Century*, New York: Academic Press.
- Warner, K.Q., (1982), *Kaiso! The Trinidad Calypso: A Study of Calypso as Oral Literature*, London: Heinemann.
- Williams, E.E., (1962), *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: PNM Publishing
- Williams, E.E., (1944/1966) *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Yelvington, K.A., (ed.), (1993), *Trinidad Ethnicity*, London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Yelvington, K.A., (1995), *Producing Power: Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in a Caribbean Workplace*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES

- Abrahams, R.D., (1983), *The Man-of-Words in the West Indies: Performance and Emergence of Creole Culture*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Adams, A.A., (1955), 'Whence Come the Calypso', *Caribbean* 8 (10), 218.
- Ahye, M., (1983), 'Orisha', *Trinidad Guardian*, October 30th.
- Appadurai, A., (1996), *Modernity at Large; the Cultural Dimension of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bakhtin, M., (1984), *Rebelais and His World*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Banton, M., (1987), *Racial Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barry, T., Wood, B., and Preusch, D., (1984), *The Other Side of Paradise; Foreign Control in the Caribbean*, New York: Grove Press.
- Bascom, W., (1969), *Ifa Divination: Communication between Gods and Men in West Africa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Baumann, G., (1996), *Contesting Culture; Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Benitez-Rojo, A., (1992), *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Post-Modern Perspective*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bird, A.C., (1997) *Trinidad Sweet: The People, Their Culture, Their Island*, Laventille, Trinidad: Zenith.
- Brathwaite, F., (1983), *Unemployment and Social Life; a Sociological Study of the Unemployed in Trinidad*, Bridgetown, Barbados: Antilles Publications.
- Bryan, A.T., (ed.), (1995), *The Caribbean: New Dynamics in Trade and Political Economy*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Chernoff, J.M., (1979), *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clarke, C.G., Ley, D., and Peach, C., (eds), (1984), *Caribbean Perspectives in Geography and Ethnic Pluralism*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Crowley, D.J., (1956), 'The Midnight Robbers', *Caribbean Quarterly* 4 (3-4), 263-274.

Dabydeen, D., and Samaroo, B., (eds), (1996), *Across the Dark Waters: Ethnicity and Indian Identity in the Caribbean*, London: Mcmillan Caribbean.

Davies, C.B., (1985), 'The Africa Theme in Trinidad Calypso', *Caribbean Quarterly* 31 (2), 67-86.

Dunham, C., (1969), *Island Possessed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Elder, J.D., (1968), *From Congo Drum to Steeldrum*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.

Elder, J.D., (1970), *New World Negroes' Search for Identity; Some Cultural Manifestations of the African Diaspora in the New World*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Centre for Multiracial Studies.

Escobar, A., (1995), *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fanon, F., (1967), *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York: Grove Press.

Foucault, M., (1980), *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, Gordon, C., (trans. and ed.), New York: Pantheon Books.

Gellner, E., (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Gilroy, P., (1987), *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilroy, P., (1993), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso.

Glazier, S.D., (1983), 'Cultural Pluralism and Respectability in Trinidad', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 6 (3), 351-355.

Gosine, M., (1986), *East Indians and Black Power in the Caribbean: The Case of Trinidad*, New York: Africana Research Publications.

- Grugel, J., (1995), *Politics and Development in the Caribbean Basin*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hebdige, D., (1987), *Cut 'n' Mix; Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music*, London: Methuen & Co.
- Henry, A.V., (1993), 'Talking Race in Trinidad and Tobago: A Practical Framework', *Caribbean Affairs* 6 (2), 23-38.
- Hill, E., (1985), 'Traditional Figures in Carnival: Their Preservation, Development and Interpretation', *Caribbean Quarterly* 31 (2), 14-31.
- Holston, J., (1989), *The Modernist City. An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hope, K.R., (1986), *Urbanization in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Houk, J.T., (1995), *Spirits, Blood, and Drums; the Orisha Religion in Trinidad*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Hurston, Z.N., (1938), *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Hyman, R., (1971), *Lower Class Families: The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jackson, I.V., (ed.), (1985), *More Than Drumming*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Jayawardena, C., (1968), 'Culture and Ethnicity in Guyana and Fiji', *Man* 15 (3), 430-450.
- Jha, J.C., (1976), 'The Hindu Festival of Divali in the Caribbean', *Caribbean Quarterly* 22 (1), 53-61.
- Jha, J.C., (1974/1985), 'Indian Heritage in Trinidad, West Indies', in La Guerre, J.G., (ed.), *Calcutta to Caroni, The East Indians of Trinidad*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.
- Karp, I., Kreamer, C.M., and Lavine, S.D., (eds), (1992), *The Politics of Public Culture*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

- Ladurie, E.L.R., (1981), *Carnival in Romans*, New York: Braziller.
- Lalta, S., and Freckleton, M., (eds), (1993), *Caribbean Economic Development: The First Generation*, Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle.
- Lamont, M., and Fournier, M., (eds), (1992), *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- La Rose, M., (1990), *Mas in Notting Hill*, London: New Beacon Press.
- Lavenda, R.H., (1980), 'The Festival of Progress: The Globalizing World System and the Transformation of the Caracas Carnival', *Journal of Popular Culture* 14 (3), 465-475.
- Levine, B.B., (ed.), (1987), *The Caribbean Exodus*, New York: Praeger.
- Lovelace, E., (1979), *The Dragon Can't Dance*, London: A. Deutsch.
- Lowenthal, D., (1972), *West Indian Societies*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- MacAloon, J.J., (ed.), (1984), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- MacDonald, S.B., (1986), *Trinidad and Tobago: Democracy and Development in the Caribbean*, New York: Praeger.
- Magid, A., (1988), *Urban Nationalism: A Study of Political Development in Trinidad*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Mahabir, N.K., (1985), *The Still Cry*, Tacarigua, Trinidad: Calaloux Publications.
- Manning, F.E., (1978), 'Carnival in Antigua: An Indigenous Festival in a Tourist Economy', *Anthropos* 73, 191-204.
- Mintz, S.W., (1985), *Sweetness and Power: the Place of Sugar in Modern History*, New York: Viking.
- Murphy, J.M., (1994), *Working the Spirit: Ceremony of the Africa Diaspora*, Boston: Beacon Press.

- Naipul, V.S., (1962), *The Middle Passage*, London: Andre Deutsch.
- Nketia-Kwabena, J.H., (1965), 'The Interrelation of African Music and Dance', *Studia Musicologica* 7, 91-101.
- Noel, T., (1978), *The Steelband*, London: The Commonwealth Institute.
- Olwig, K.F., (1995), *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture, and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*, London: Frank Cass.
- Ottley, C.R., (1978), *The Trinidad Callaloo (1851-1900)*, Diego Martin, Trinidad: Crusoe Publishing House.
- Pantin, R., (1990), *Black Power Day: The 1970 February Revolution*, Santa Cruz, Trinidad: Hatuey Production.
- Rahier, J.M., (ed.), (1999), *Representation of Blackness and the Performance of Identities*, Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Ramesar, M., (1976), 'Patterns of Regional Settlement and Economic Activity by Immigrant Groups in Trinidad: 1851-1900', *Social and Economic Studies* 25 (3), 187-215.
- Reddock, R., (ed.), (1996), *Ethnic Minorities in Caribbean Society*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute for Social and Economic Research.
- Romanucci-Ross, L., and DeVos, G., (eds), (1995), *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*, Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Ryan, S., (1991), *The Muslimeen Grab for Power: Race, Religion, and Revolution in Trinidad*, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Imprint Caribbean.
- Simpson, G.E., (1980), *Religious Cults of the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica, Haiti*, Rio Piedras: Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico.
- Singh, C., (1988), *Guyana Politics in a Plantation Society*, New York: Praeger.
- Solow, B. L., and Engerman, S.L., (eds), (1988), *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery; the Legacy of Eric Williams*, New York: Columbia University Press.

- Stallybrass, P., and White, A., (1986), *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Stewart, J.O., (1988), *Drinkers, Drummers, and Decent Folk: Ethnographic Narratives of Village Trinidad*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Stewart, J.O., (1995), 'Carnival Mourning' in *Bridges to Humanity*, B.Grindal and F. Salamone, (eds), Prospect Hill, IL: Waveland Press.
- Thomas, C.Y., (1988), *The Poor and the Powerless; Economic Policy and Change in the Caribbean*, London: Latin America Bureau.
- Torres, A., and Whitten, N.E., (eds), (1998), *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Tracey, K.E., (1994), 'Adaptive Responses to Race and Ethnic Conflict', *Caribbean Quarterly* 40 (3-4), 98-108.
- Vasel, R.K., (1984), *Politics in Bi-Racial Societies. The Third World Experience*, New Delhi: Vikas.
- Williams, B.F., (1991), *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Wood, D., (1968), *Trinidad in Transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yinger, J.M., (1994), *Ethnicity: Source of Strength? Source of Conflict?*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs were taken by the author during her fieldwork in Trinidad. The exception being the two images comprising Figure 34, which were shot in 1996 by one of her informants. Permission was given for the publication of these photographs.



Figure 1. Map of the Caribbean Basin.

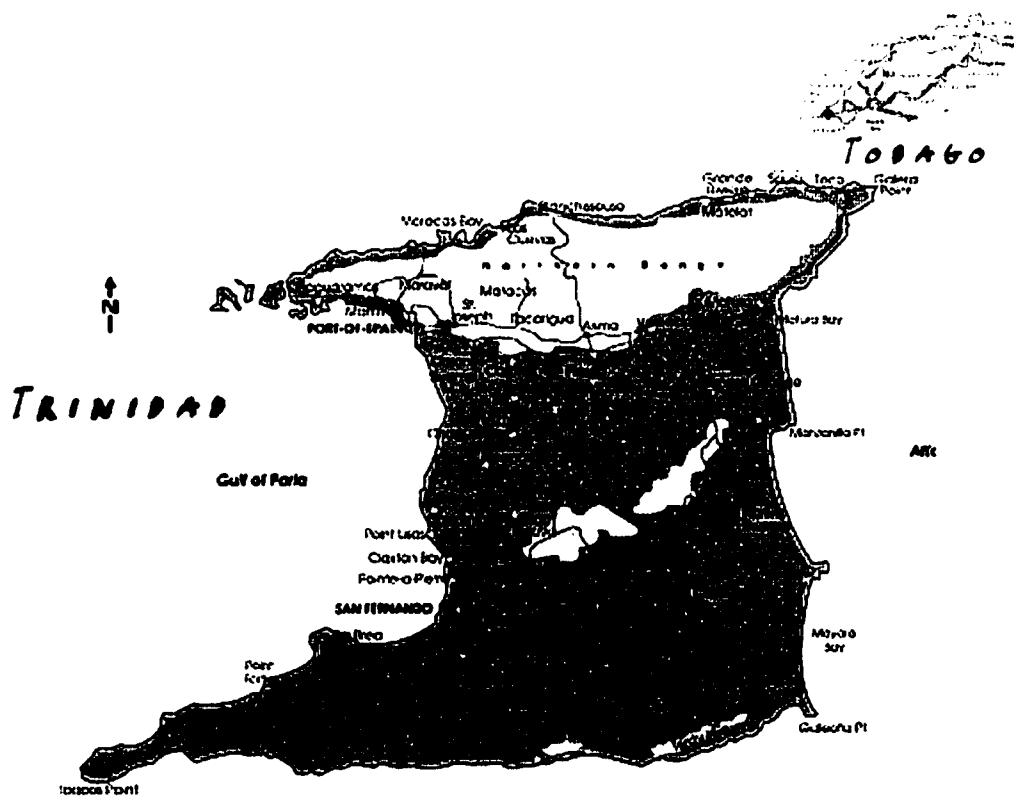


Figure 2. Map of the islands of Trinidad and Tobago.



Figure 3. Map of the capital city of Port-of-Spain.

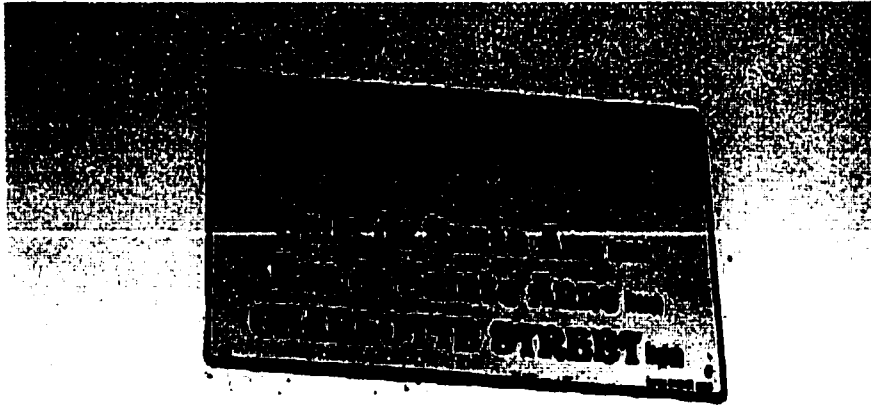


Figure 4. Polyglot street sign found in Port-of-Spain



Figure 5. Streets in St. James bearing Indian names.



Figure 6. Cricket game at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port-of-Spain.
(on author's t-shirt: "Me, *liming*? Nah, this is official research!")



Figure 7. Independence Day parade along Woodbrook.



Figure 8. Rehearsal at the Silver Stars panyard.



Figure 9. *Pichakaree* song/letter to the Minister of Culture, calypsonian Chalkie.



Figure 10. Kiddies' Carnival in the streets of Port-of-Spain.



Figure 11. African characters 'moko jumbies' on stilts.

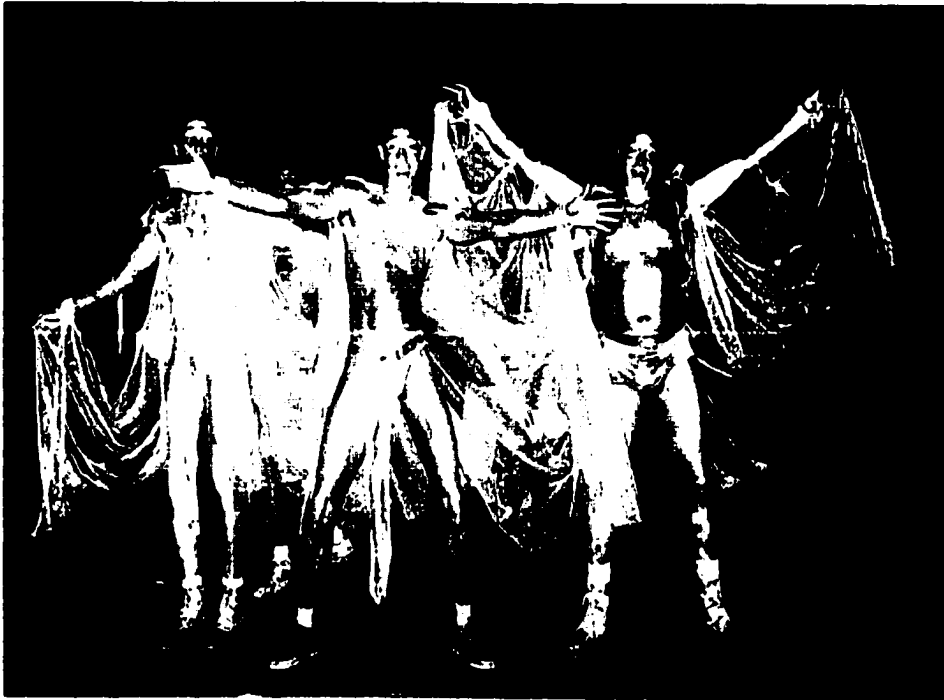


Figure 12. *J'Ouvert* night characters.



Figure 13. Traditional o/e 'mas' fancy sailors.



Figure 14. Pretty 'mas' is woman!



Figure 15. Carnival truck loaded with musicians and sound equipment.



Figure 16. Group photo of *Ramleela* actors.



Figure 17. Indian villager celebrating *Ramleela*.



Figure 18: Sporting a Nike outfit the effigy of evil *Rawan* is set ablaze.



Figure 19. *Divali* deyas in a Hindu temple.



Figure 20. *Divali* bamboo and wattle structures holding deyas.



Figure 21. Hindus celebrating *Phagwa*.



Figure 22. Hindu women singing *chowtals*.

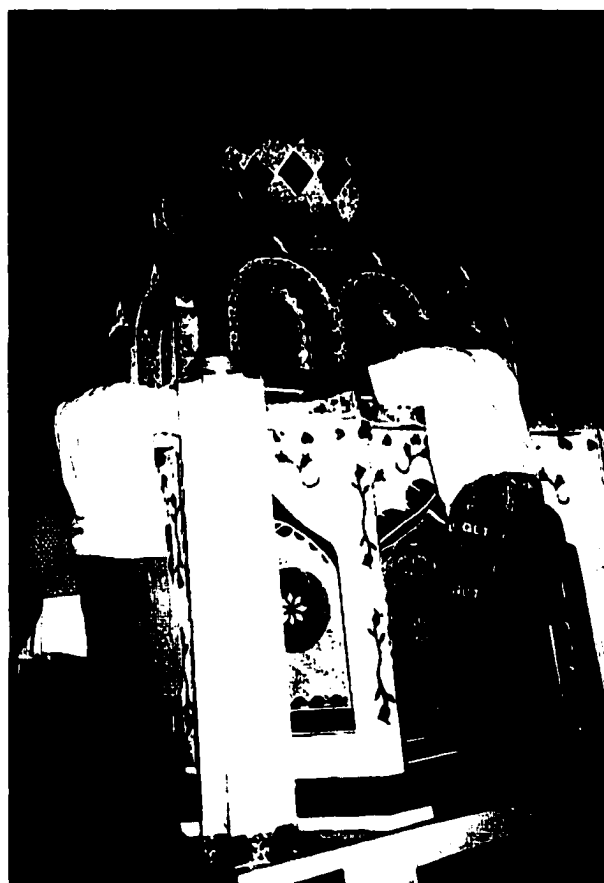


Figure 23. *Tadjah* building: initial and final stages.

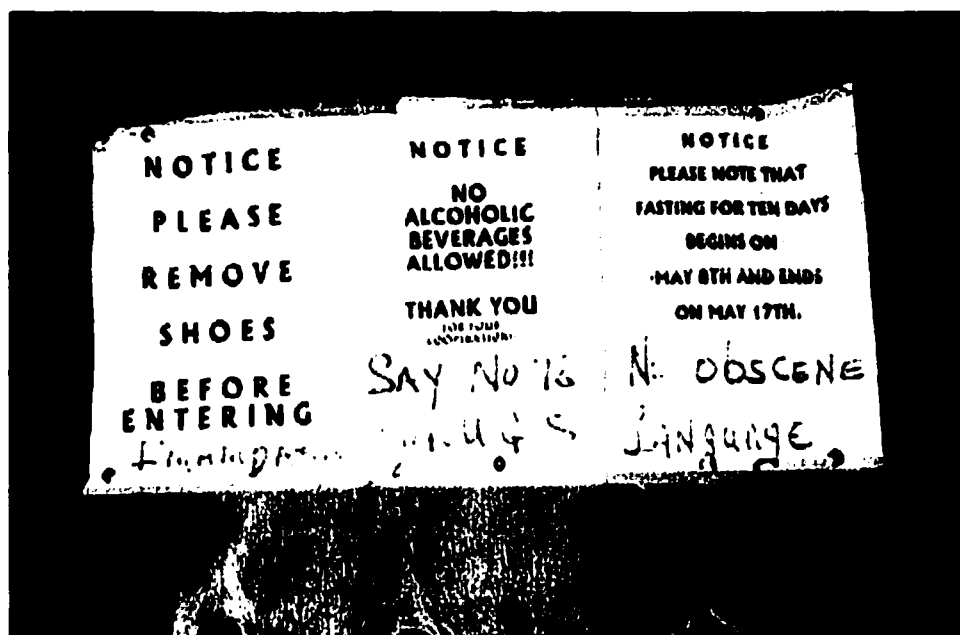


Figure 24. Warning sign outside a Muslim *Imambarah*.



Figure 25. Sacred chowk at the Bis-Ali *tadja*-yard.



Figure 26. Symbolic moon paraded during *Hosay*.



Figure 27. *Hosay* *tassa* drummers around the fire.



Figure 28. Traditional, 'three-day bamboo' Hindu wedding.

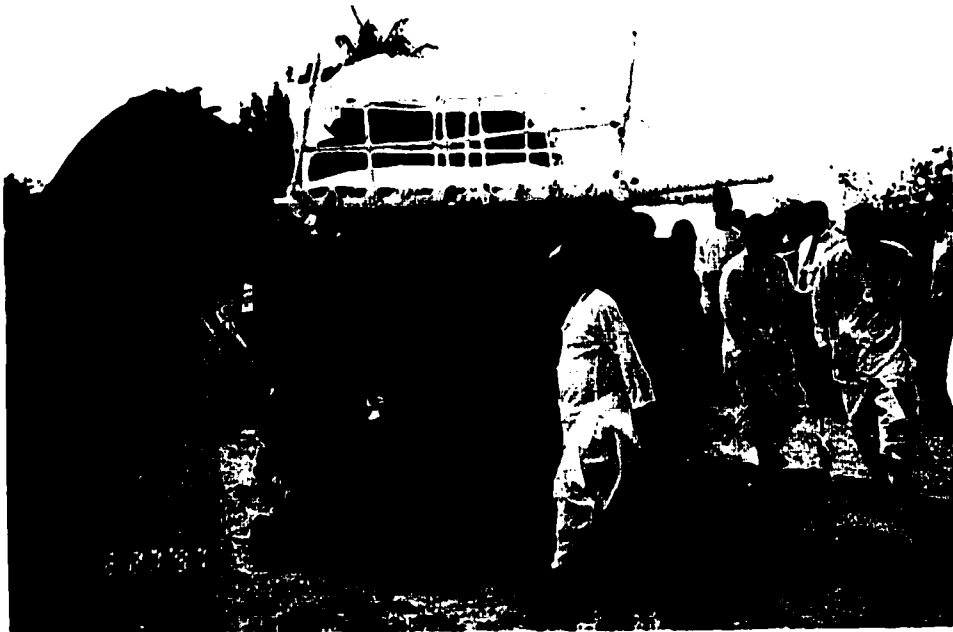


Figure 29. Hindu cremation.



Figure 30. African Rada community celebrating their ancestors.



Figure 31. Rada divination paraphernalia.

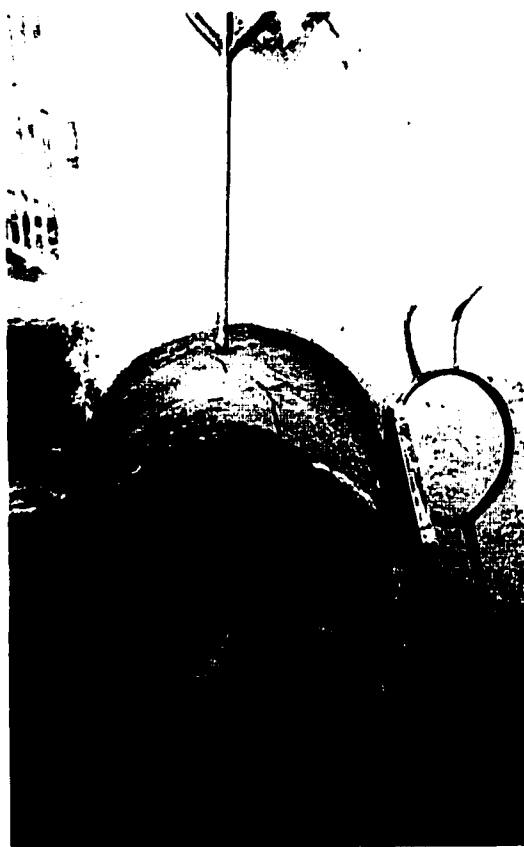


Figure 32. African congregation attending a Saraka and Orisha altar with offerings.



Figure 33. Scenes from an Orisha initiation ceremony.



Figure 34. The 'holification' of river Ganga and a Hindu *Mundan Sanskar* ritual held at the same location.



Figure 35. *Tambour-bamboo* rehearsal.



Figure 36. Hindus circumambulating Trinidad.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY

AARTI: Paying homage to a Hindu deity by waving light. Usually the devotee makes vertical circles with a *tharia* containing either burning camphor or a lit *deya* before the person or the deity being honored (both a noun and a verb).

ABEER: Red spray paint used during the Hindu celebration of *Phagwa*.

BABALOA: African Orisha priest.

BARAHIS: A Hindu feast held twelve days after the birth of a child.

BELE: A typical Tobagonian dance including African and European elements.

BHABHUT: Hindu sacred ash made with consecrated burned cow dung.

BHAJAN: Hindu religious song.

BHASHAN: (Hindi) language.

BHOJAN: (Hindi) food.

BHUSHAN: (Hindi) garment.

BRAHMAN: Member of the highest of the inherited Hindu *varnas* and the only one traditionally allowed to perform many priestly roles.

BURROQUITE: Venezuelan carnival character with a donkey head.

CALALOO: A typical Trinidadian dish.

CALYPSO or KAISO: Trinidadian African singing style including pungent social commentary.

CALYPSO TENT: A space where calypso music is performed.

CANBOULAY: A torch-light procession remembering slavery.

CAPRA: (Hindi) clothes.

CHANTUELLE: 19th century singer and group leader of Carnival bands.

CHOWK: Space in the Muslim *tadjah*-yard sanctified during *Hosay*.

CHOWTAL: Hindu devotional song performed during *Phagwa*.

CHUTNEY or BREAK-AWAY: Upbeat Indian music now popular throughout Trinidad.

CREOLIZATION: Cultural and biological mixing between two or more human populations. In Trinidad it refers mainly to processes of assimilation between Africans and whites.

CUATRO: Small guitar used in Venezuelan music.

DEOTA (Sanskrit: *devata*) A Hindu deity. Locally, the term *deota* is used to refer to any of the gods or goddesses.

DEVI: A goddess and manifestation of the Hindu Divine Mother.

DEYA: Inexpensive, small clay lamp containing coconut oil or *ghee* and a wick. It is lit as a small lamp in most Hindu rituals. Thousands of *deyas* are lit on *Divali*.

DHANTAL: A traditional Indian percussive musical instrument.

DHAR: Same as PRACHAR DHAR.

DHOTI: Traditional Indian men's garment where cotton cloth is wrapped around the waist and the legs.

DIVALI: Most widely celebrated Hindu festival honoring the goddess Laksmi. *Divali* is considered a time of peace, forgiveness, and enlightenment.

DIVALI NAGAR: A Indian cultural complex holding a popular trade fair for *Divali*. This is a grand exhibition of Indian identity with cultural expressions and trade booths as primary attractions. The National Council of Indian Culture has been managing the Nagar for the last 10 years.

DOUBLE: A popular Trinidadian Indian snack.

DOUGLARIZATION: A process of hybridization similar to CREOLIZATION. In Trinidad it applies to mixed individuals of African and Indian descent.

FEAST: African religious ceremonies paying homage to Orisha deities. They can last for one to nine days and nights.

FETE: (French) A party or celebration (both a noun and verb).

FLAMBEAU: A Small burning bottle filled with kerosene and used as a torch.

GANGA AARTI: Hindu celebration performed at the Trinidadian river Ganga.

GARARAS: Indian women dresses with long, full skirts.

GHEE: Substance similar to butter made from cow's milk commonly used in Indian cooking.

GRAMOXONE: Poisonous herbicide used self-destructively especially among Indians.

GRIOT: A caste of professional musicians found in West Africa.

HALVAH: Cream of wheat

HENNA: Reddish dyestuff obtained from the leaves of the henna tree used for cosmetics.

HOLI or HOLIKA: see *Phagwa*.

HOLIKA DAHAN: Ritual burning of an effigy of evil Holika.

HOSAY: Muslim *Shi'ite* funeral procession celebrated yearly during the month of *Murrah*.

IFA: Oracle of Orisha divination.

IMAM: Muslim spiritual leader.

IMAMBARAH: The space where the *tadjah* is built for the *Hosay* procession.

JAI: 'Victory'; Hindu shout used throughout significant sections of *pujas*.

JAMETTE: Word corrupted from the French *diametre* referring to individuals acting 'extreme' during Carnival (noun and adjective).

JHAL: Water usually 'thrown' in honor of a Hindu deity.

JHANDI: A colored flag erected at the end of a *puja*. Both Hindu temples and households plant flags in their yard in recognition of *pujas* performed to specific divinities. A *Jhandi* is kept until it deteriorates, and provides a subtle reminder to perform *pujas* at frequent intervals.

JHARAY: To touch, sometimes with an item, for the purpose of cleansing or blessing. This Hindu ritual is often accompanied by the recitation of a *mantra*. In the Kali temple it also means to consult with the deities. *Jharays* are performed by *pundits* as well as *pujaris*.

JIHAJI BHAI: 'Ship Brother', a close friend made during the passage from India.

J'OUVERT: A chaotic parade opening the Trinidad Carnival celebrations.

JUMBIE: African ghost.

JUMP-UP: Dancing and jumping on upbeat soca songs.

KALINDA: Dances of African origin performed during Carnival.

KARAGAM: A *lota* decorated with flowers, leaves, and other sacred items used during a Hindu Kali *puja* or other celebrations.

KARTIK: Hindu month corresponding to October-November.

KARTIK SNAAN: Hindu celebration performed at the end of *Kartik*.

KATHATRIYA: The second Hindu caste or warrior *varna*. In Trinidad also known as *Chatries*.

LIMBO: Acrobatic African dance where performers attempt to walk under a wooden bar kept as low as inches from the floor.

LIME: The complex art of doing nothing, to idle with one's friends.

LOTA: A brass vessel holding liquids. In Hindu religious ceremonies it holds **JHAL** or **DHAR**.

MALA: A necklace of flowers strung on threads, often put on the heads of a Hindu *murti*. Occasionally, people possessed by a *deota* will bless a devotee by giving him/her a *mala*. It also refers to Hindu rosaries.

MALIDA: Indian sweet used in religious occasions.

MANDIR: A Hindu temple.

MANTRA: A sacred verse, phrase or formula considered to have magical and spiritual value when repeated.

'MAS': Contraction of 'masquerade' as well as the parading of Carnival costumes.

'MAS' CAMP: Space where Carnival costumes are produced by a 'mas' band.

MASEEHAHA: Muslim wailing songs of mourning.

- MASJEED:** A Muslim mosque, a place of prostration.
- MATIKOR:** The ritual of digging dirt proceeding the performance of the first ceremony of a traditional three-day Hindu wedding.
- MAXI-TAXI:** A popular Trinidadian mode of transportation.
- MEPRIS:** (French) 'Scorn'. Usually expressed through calypso lyrics.
- MOKO:** African god.
- MUDRA:** A position of the hands carrying spiritual and symbolic significance among Hindus.
- MUHARRAN:** Islamic month during which Shiites remember Husayn's death by performing a kind of passion-play in Trinidad referred as *Hosay*.
- MUNDAN SANSKAR:** The first cutting of the hair of a newborn Hindu baby.
- MURTI:** An image of a Hindu deity in the form of a statue.
- OBEAH:** A magical practice of African descent. It is occasionally associated with evil-doing.
- OHM:** Hindu religious symbolism and sacred sound.
- OONI:** The 'Holi King' in the African Yoruba religious hierarchy.
- ORISHA:** African religious system of Yoruba origin. The term also is used for 'deity' or 'power'.
- ORISHA FLAGS:** Similar in function to Hindu *jhandis* but used to represent African Orisha powers. While *jhandis* are rectangular, Orisha flags are usually triangular in shape
- PALAIS:** An enclosure where African Orisha ceremonies take place. It usually has a dirt-floor and contains permanent religious symbols such as a sword planted in the ground, a candle, a goblet of water, and various other objects.
- PAN:** see STEELDRUM.
- PAN-PUSHER:** Pan fans.
- PAN-YARD:** Space where steelbands rehearse tunes.
- PANCHAYAT:** A group of Hindu village councilors.
- PANORAMA:** The main nationwide steelband Carnival competition.
- PARANG:** Typical Venezuelan music played in Trinidad during the Christmas season.
- PASTEL:** Culinary delicacy of Venezuelan origin.
- PATOIS:** A local dialect, now in disuse, including French and English linguistic elements.
- PERSAD:** (Sanskrit: *prasad*) Food which has been sanctified by contact with Hindu deities or through the actions of a religious ritual and which is shared among the devotees.
- PHAGWA:** Hindu religious celebration coinciding with the arrival of spring.
- PHALGUN:** Hindu month corresponding to February-March.

PICHAKAREE: Both a style of Indian music and a plastic blow-gun used to spray *Abeer* during *Phagwa*.

PICONG: (French) 'Provocation'. Often used in calypso lyrics.

PLAY 'MAS': (verb) To join a costumed band and parade in the streets.

PRADAKSHANA: In Hinduism, the circumambulating of a sacred object.

PRANAM: Among Hindus, a position of prayer and reverence. The hands are held at the chest with the palms together, fingers extended pointing toward the sky.

PUJA: A series of sixteen symbolic offerings made to a Hindu deity in supplication or gratitude. There are several types of *pujas*.

PUJARI: A person who performs *pujas*. Kali temples refer to a male member of the temple as a *pujari*; effectively, they are priests, but they are distinguished from the orthodox Brahman *pundits*.

PUNDIT: 'a Hindu learned man'. In Trinidad it refers to an orthodox Brahman priest.

RADA: African religious system with roots in the Republic of Benin.

RAMLEELA: Hindu theatre performance nine-day long.

SARAKA: Celebration of African derivation paying homage to the ancestors.

SARI: Elaborated, colorful, often embroidered full-length dress worn by Indian women.

SAWINE: Muslim sweet drink made of milk and noodles.

SHAKTI: Hindu form of cosmic energy.

SHALWAR: Indian women's traditional two-piece suit with mid-length top and wide pants.

SHANGO: African Yoruba god. In Trinidad it is used interchangeably with Orisha.

SHANTI: 'Peace'. In Kali temples it designates the act of sending a *deota* away from a possessed person.

SHARARA: Traditional multi-layered dress with different pieces such as vests or jackets.

SHI'ITE: A member of the Muslim minority who regards the heirs of Ali (Mohammed's son-in-law and cousin) as the legitimate successors of the Prophet.

SINDUR: Vermilion powder used in Hindu ritual preparations and *tikas*.

SOCA: Upbeat Trinidadian music mixing soul and calypso elements.

SOPAREE MAI: Indian goddess associated with the Catholic 'Divina Pastora' in the town of Siparia.

STEELBAND: A musical ensemble including pannists (pan players) and percussionists.

STEELDRUM or PAN: Trinidadian national music instrument.

STOOL: Little hut built in the yard of an Orisha *Palais* where candles, offerings, and symbolic religious paraphernalia are kept.

SUNNI: A member of the Muslim majority following an orthodox ideology strongly concerned with the maintenance of the purity of Islam. Sunnis accept the first four caliphs as rightful successors of the prophet Mohammed.

SWAMI: Hindu wise and religious man.

TADJAH: Tomb replica used during the *Hosay* procession.

TADJAH YARD: Space where *tadjahs* are built.

TAMBOUR-BAMBOO: Percussive instrument of African origin made of bamboo and played with sticks or against the ground.

TASSA: Indian drum beaten with two wooden sticks used during the *Hosay* procession.

THANKSGIVING (or FEAST): African Orisha celebration given to fulfill certain promises or to pay homage to the powers.

THARIA: A brass platter used in Hindu religious rituals to hold items such as herbs, candles, flowers, and the camphor used for *arti*.

TIKA: The mark of red powder put on the forehead of a Hindu devotee or a *murti* as a blessing (noun and verb).

TRINI: Affectionate contraction for 'Trinidadian'.

UMMA: The Islamic community.

WINE: (verb) To dance with a strongly gyrating motion of the hips.

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGY

- 1498** Columbus lands in Trinidad and finds about 35,000 Amerindian inhabitants.
- 1592** Trinidad becomes the first Spanish colony.
- 1595** Sir W. Raleigh discovers Pitch Lake. For the following two centuries the island lacks adequate population for its full-scale occupation.
- 1783** The *Cedula de Poblacion*, issued by the Spanish Crown, initiates a massive immigration of Frenchmen and women, as well as of African slaves. During the following 15 years the total Trinidadian population increases from about 3,000 to 18,000 and the number of slaves from roughly 300 to 10,000.
- 1797** Sir R. Abercombie captures Trinidad for Britain.
- 1802** Trinidad is ceded to Britain under the treaty of Amiens.
- 1834** The British Parliament passes the Slave Emancipation Act.
- 1838** Apprenticeship ends and ex-slaves gain complete emancipation.
- African ex-slaves migrate to the cities where a process of Creolization is initiated with the dominant European classes. In the next 100 years about 100,000 African West Indians also migrate to Trinidad and settle in urban centers.

- 1845 Indentureship brings East Indian workers to the rural areas of Trinidad where they experience social and spatial isolation.
- 1846 Portuguese, Chinese, Irish, Scots, Germans, Middle Easterners and Venezuelans settle in Trinidad. The latter specialize in cocoa cultivation while the other groups move to the cities where they enter the private and government sectors.
- 1868 The Canadian Presbyterian Mission begins its religious conversions and educational work among East Indians.
- 1881 *Canboulay* riots erupt during Carnival in Port-of-Spain.
- 1883 The use of skin-drums and Carnival masks is outlawed.
- 1884 British troops massacre Indian participants during the *Muharram* procession in San Fernando.
- 1885 *J'Ouvert* is scheduled to start Monday at 6am rather than Sunday. The use of sticks and torches requires prior permission while Marshall Law is enacted throughout Carnival time.
- 1889 Tobago becomes part of the colonial unit of Trinidad.
- 1910 Petroleum is discovered in Trinidad.
- 1914 Trinidadians fight during WWI in the British West Indian Regiment.
- 1917 Indentureship ends (a total of 140,000 East Indians have entered the island and only one fifth has returned to the mother country).
- 1935 Protests break out against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.
- 1938 The British Moyne Commission investigates island-wide labor strikes.

- 1938** Trinidad experiences a war time boom of the oil industry.
- 1941** Land is given for U.S. military bases and operation. Through U.S. servicemen calypso music enters the international market.
- 1952** The West Indian Independence Party (WIIP) is formed.
- 1956** Charismatic African scholar E.E. Williams leads the First People's National Movement (PNM) government.
- 1958** Commonwealth colonies establish the Federation of the West Indies.
- 1962** Trinidad and Tobago gain independence from Britain and the Federation is dissolved.
- 1970** There is an attempted army *coup d'etat*.
- 1974** The petroleum related economic boom initiates an Indian migration to urban centers where a process of *Douglarization* between the Indians and Africans intensifies.
- 1976** Trinidad and Tobago becomes a republic within the Commonwealth.
- 1980** The Tobago House of Assembly is established.
- 1981** The first Prime Minister E.E. Williams dies while still in office; the country experiences a major economic recession.
- 1986** The PNM political supremacy is interrupted by the victory of a multi-ethnic based political party (NAR).
- 1987** N. Hassanali becomes the first Indo-Muslim Head of State.

1990 There is a *coup d'etat* by the Muslem group *Jamaat al-Muslimeen*.

The national census records in the last decade a 12 percent increase of the Mixed segment of the local population (including *Douglas*).

1995 Labor unionist leader B. Panday becomes the first Hindu Prime Minister of Indian descent.

APPENDIX D

1997-1998 CALENDAR OF ANNUAL FESTIVALS

- January-February *Ramadan* is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and is observed by Muslims with a daily fast from sunrise to sunset.
- Carnival pre-selections encompass nationwide competitions between artists vying for any of the many titles given during Carnival celebrations.
- 2/9/1997 *Eid-ul-Fitr* is a public holiday celebrating the end of *Ramadan*. Muslims share a big meal at local mosques, but at private gatherings non-Muslim friends may attend as well.
- 2/10-12/1997 Carnival is a national event celebrated in major cities throughout the two islands. Africans, Creoles, and whites mainly attend the impressive displays held in Port-of-Spain. 10 percent of the local population actively takes part in Carnival while almost 200,000 revelers enjoy various events (Mason, 1988). Indians participation is predominant in San Fernando, the largest urban center in 'Indian Country'.
- 3/23/1997 *Phagwa* is a Hindu festival celebrating the arrival of spring and the victory of good over evil. It is observed in various outdoor venues along areas densely populated by Indians. Although it is becoming more visible nationwide, this celebration is considered a more tamed and predominantly Indian version of Carnival.
- 3/30/1997 Shouter Baptist Liberation Day is observed at the Queen's Park Savannah and is attended by members of this Church. The audience is exclusively African and largely made up of women. The current Hindu PM is particularly supportive of this religion because of its long struggle against persecution and his party's attempt to gain the support of some segments of the African population.

- 3/30-31/1997** Easter is a public holiday marking the culmination of a Christian liturgical cycle beginning with Ash Wednesday (which marks the end of Carnival). Christians of all backgrounds commemorate in churches throughout the nation Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection into Heaven.
- 4/1/1997** The Tobago Goat Racing Festival is held in Tobago on Easter Tuesday. It is a folk-affair and is attended by locals who are exclusively African. Occasional tourists vacationing in the near-by resorts may also be present.
- 4/12/1997** La Divina Pastora Procession (not attended by the author) is held in the southern town of Siparia and is celebrated by both Catholics and Hindus. The latter recognize the Catholic Patron Saint Divina Pastora by the name *Sipari Ke Mai* (Mother of Siparia). On the second Sunday after Easter, Catholics and Hindus decorate the statue of the Saint with offerings and parade the sacred image through the streets of Siparia.
- 5/15-20/1997** Hosay is a Muslim funeral procession observed in St. James (Port-of-Spain) and in the southern town of Cedros. Presently an ethnically-mixed audience attends the event while non-Muslims increasingly participate in its preparations.
- 5/25/1997** African Unity Day is a budding celebration honoring a symbolic pan-African Independence Day. I attended a cultural affair held in a community center in Port-of-Spain but I was told other venues were also commemorating the Day. Its visibility is extremely limited and only a small number of African activist, artists, and locals attended the cultural program.
- 5/30/1997** Indian Arrival Day is marked by celebrations remembering the arrival in Trinidad of Indian immigrants. Re-enactments of the arrival of Indian workers on boats are performed by their descendents for a predominantly Indian crowd.

- 6/12/1997** Orisha Day honors the Orisha religion through various cultural programs. Although different Orisha yards celebrate the Day, King George V Park in St. James is the official venue. When I was there perhaps only one-hundred Africans participated in the event.
- 6/15/1997** Ganga Aarti (not attended by the author) is a Hindu religious celebration worshipping the river goddess, Ganga and held along the river Gangadhara. Friends informed me that participants are exclusively Hindu.
- 7/24-28/1997** The Tobago Heritage Festival (the festival begins mid-July) is a festival created to preserve the unique cultural traditions of Tobago. It is attended mainly by Tobagonians, Africans from Trinidad, and occasional tourists.
- 8/1/1997** Emancipation Day includes a week of pan-African cultural events celebrating freedom and the African heritage. Events are held in a variety of venues throughout the island but mainly in the capital city where the attendants are almost exclusively African.
- The exciting Great Race is a powerboat race starting in Trinidad and finishing in Tobago. It is followed by thousands of ethnically-mixed spectators gathering north of Port-of-Spain and along the Northern Mountain Range of the main island. Booths, food stands, and music turn the sporting competition into a social event.
- 8/15/1997** Indian independence is celebrated by Indians with a cultural program organized by the local Indian Embassy as well as by various Indian cultural organizations throughout the island.
- 8/24/1997** The Festival of Santa Rosa (Rose of Lima) is one of the oldest indigenous festivals observed in Trinidad. It takes place in the city of Arima (along the East-West Corridor) where descendents of the Amerindian Carib tribe organize the celebrations. Devout Catholics of all ethnic backgrounds attend these events.

- 8/31/1997** **Trinidad independence is a national holiday celebrated with pomp and ceremony in the capital city. After a morning grand military parade the afternoon/evening festivities attract a much larger crowd including people of all social backgrounds.**
- 9/24/1997** **Republic Day marks Trinidad's emergence as a Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations. The government and the business community sponsor a picturesque historic pageant, which marches along the capital city. Citizens of all social backgrounds witness the various cultural aspects of Trinidadian society displayed in the parade.**
- 10/3-12/1997** ***Ramleela* is a dramatic re-enactment of Hindu Lord Rama's exploits and ultimate victory over evil. The play lasts nine days and is acted out by Indian villagers throughout Trinidad for a predominantly Indian audience.**
- 10/25-30/2000** ***Divali* is traditionally observed in Hindu temples and households throughout the island. Non-Hindu residents may not participate in the religious aspect of the festival, but they often contribute to the building and setting of *deyas* throughout neighborhoods and towns. Today this national holiday is gaining more visibility and is even attracting the interest of foreign visitors.**
- 11/13-15/1997** **The Best Village Competition was initiated in 1963 by then PM E.E. Williams to engender greater community spirit between villages throughout the island. Held in Port-of-Spain, the Competition is supposed to display Trinidadian cultural variety, but participants and observers continue to be largely African.**
- 11/16/1997** ***Kartik Snaan* is a Hindu religious celebration observing the end of Kartik, the month of darkness. It is held at Gangadhara and is attended exclusively by Hindus.**
- 12/24/1997** **Christmas is a major Christian holiday and is celebrated by Catholics throughout the island with a Midnight Mass. Even non-Catholics may participate by attending family get-togethers the following day.**

- 12/26-1/1/1997-8** Kwanzaa is an African-American commemoration of cultural reaffirmation started in the 1970's by Maulana Karenga. It is a spiritual, festive celebration of the goodness of life and claims no ties with any religion. In Trinidad, market and cultural fairs are held in the main cities and more religious oriented gatherings are organized in African churches or Orisha yards. Attendance is predominantly African.
- January-February** *Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr, and Carnival* pre-selections; see description for previous year.
- 2/18-21/1998** The Rada Community Celebration of the Ancestors is an annual thanksgiving festival paying homage to the ancestors for their guidance and favors. It is attended exclusively by the small number of members of this community.
- 2/23-25/1998** Carnival; see description for previous year.

APPENDIX E

STATISTICS

(from TIDCO Statistical Unit, 1997)

Area	1980 sq. mi.
Capital	Port-of-Spain
Natural Resources	Oil, petroleum, gas
Agriculture	Sugar cane, cacao, coffee, bananas
Industry	Petroleum, cement, hydrocarbons, food processing
Population	1,300,000
Ethnic %	Indians 40.3%; Africans 39.6%; Mixed 18.4%; Middle Easterners 0.6%; Europeans 0.6%; Chinese 0.5%.
Language	English
Religion %	Roman Catholics 29.3%; Hindus 23.8%; Anglicans 10.9%; Protestants 11%; Muslims 5.8%; Presbyterians 3.4%; Others 16%
Urban Populations	73% (World Bank, 1998)
Poverty	21% below national poverty line (World Bank, 1998)
Annual Inflation rate	3.7
Unemployment	14%
GNP/capita	US\$ 4,430 (World Bank 1998)
GNP/total	US\$ 5.8 billion (World Bank, 1998)

Year:	1977	1987	1998
--------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

% of GDP (World Bank, 1998)			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

Agriculture	3.5	2.6	2.0
--------------------	------------	------------	------------

Industry	59.1	41.5	44.0
-----------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Manufacturing	13.8	7.8	8.0
----------------------	-------------	------------	------------

Services	37.5	55.9	56.2
-----------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Travel

Arrivals: Total Visitors	(1994) 634,316	(1996) 677,152
---------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

No. Hotel Rooms	(1994) 2,192	(1996) 3,531
------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Estimated Expenditure of Tourists	(1994) US\$ 81M	(1996) US\$ 100M
--	------------------------	-------------------------

VITA

The author of this doctoral work, Francesca Giancristofaro-Calvi, grew up in Italy. She attended elementary and junior high school in Gorizia but graduated from the Liceo Scientifico Vittorio Veneto (High School) in Milan.

In 1989 the author received a double undergraduate degree, a B.A. in Anthropology and a B.S. in Earth Sciences, from the University of Massachusetts at Boston. In 1991 she also completed a M.S. in Environmental Sciences with a specialty in Physical Oceanography. The following year, Francesca began working in the Oceanography Department of Texas A&M University as a Research Associate. At this same university she received an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1994 and 2000 respectively. The author can be contacted through the Anthropology Department of Texas A&M University, 234 Anthropology Building, College Station, TX. 77843.